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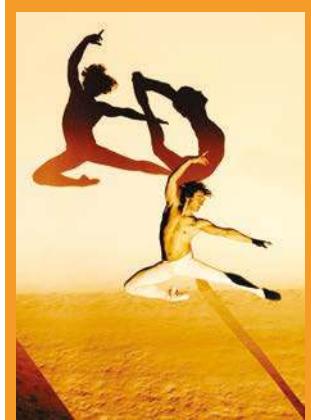


Dance teachers are the focus of this month's *Dancing Times*, which includes interviews with ballet teachers Carlos Valcárcel, now head of dance at English National Ballet School, and the Greek-born Christiana Stefanou, who travels the world teaching at a number of prestigious ballet companies. In addition, regular contributor Phil Meacham considers the impact Brexit (don't groan!) may have on ballroom and Latin American teachers and studios based in the UK.

In addition, we talk to Ivan Putrov, the former principal with The Royal Ballet who is launching a new show focused on the male dancer at the London Coliseum, and Vincent Simone, the former *Strictly Come Dancing* favourite, who is about to embark on a UK tour alongside Ian Waite.

Stage design is also featured in this month's magazine, with an interview with veteran designer Jürgen Rose, currently working on a new production of Kenneth MacMillan's *Mayerling* for the Stuttgart Ballet, and a preview of an exhibition in Cardiff of designs for The Royal Ballet's production of *Swan Lake* by John Macfarlane.

JONATHAN GRAY



Ivan Putrov.

Contributors

Laura Dodge

has a Master's degree in Ballet Studies and over a decade of experience teaching ballet, tap and Pilates to children and adults. She currently teaches at Spring School of Ballet and examines for the International Baccalaureate. She writes for *Dancing Times* and *Dance Musings* and has previously written for Londondance, *Dance International* and English National Ballet. She is also training in counselling with a view to working in mental health for dancers, and is a keen amateur ballet dancer.

Jonathan Gray

is editor of *Dancing Times*. He studied at The Royal Ballet School, Leicester Polytechnic and Wimbledon School of Art. From 1989 to 2005, he was a member of the curatorial staff of the Theatre Museum, London.

Lee Knights

is a qualified journalist

and IDTA dance instructor. Passionate about Latin dance and music, she is co-author of *Find the Rhythm! the Dancers' Guide to Feeling Salsa Music* with the salsa bandleader and pianist Alex Wilson.

Phil Meacham

is the principal and managing director of Chelmsford Dance Centre in Essex. After retiring from competitive dancing in 2002, Phil is now a regular compère at dance events and enjoys judging major competitions in his capacity as Championship International Adjudicator. Phil is a Dual Fellow in Ballroom and Latin American Dancing, the highest qualifications available to a professional dance teacher in the UK, as well as being an Examiner of the National Association of Teachers of Dancing (NATD).

Natasha Rogai

is a member of a Russian

émigré family of dancers, dance critics and balletomanes. Originally from London, she worked in Paris for many years and has lived in Hong Kong since 1997. She is dance critic of Hong Kong's leading English language daily newspaper, the *South China Morning Post*.

Marianka Swain

is a freelance writer and social dancer at several London venues. You can find more of her work at mkmswain.com.

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Printed in the UK by Warners
Midlands plc. www.warners.co.uk

Distributed by Warners Group
Publications plc, The Maltings,
West Street, Bourne, LINCS

The Dancing Times Founded in 1910
by Philip J S Richardson OBE FRAD
Mary Clarke R, FRSA Editor Emeritus

Subscription rates

United Kingdom

1 year - £39.50
2 years - £75.05
3 years - £110.60

Overseas worldwide

1 year - £55.00
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ENB celebrates 70 years

ENGLISH NATIONAL BALLET'S PLANS for 2019–20 is a season of celebration. As well as moving to its new state-of-the-art home on London City Island this spring, in April 2020 Akram Khan will create a second full-length production for the company. Titled *Creature*, it is based on Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, and will receive its world premiere at Sadler's Wells. In addition, ENB has secured a commitment of a £1million grant from The Mayor of London's Good Growth Fund to support the company's move to its new home, as well as its east London-focused project, Bridging Neighbourhoods – Growing Talent.

The 2019–20 season will open at Sadler's Wells on September 18 with a revival of Khan's popular version of *Giselle*, followed by a tour to Manchester and Southampton of Christopher Wheeldon's *Cinderella*, which will first be performed in-the-round at

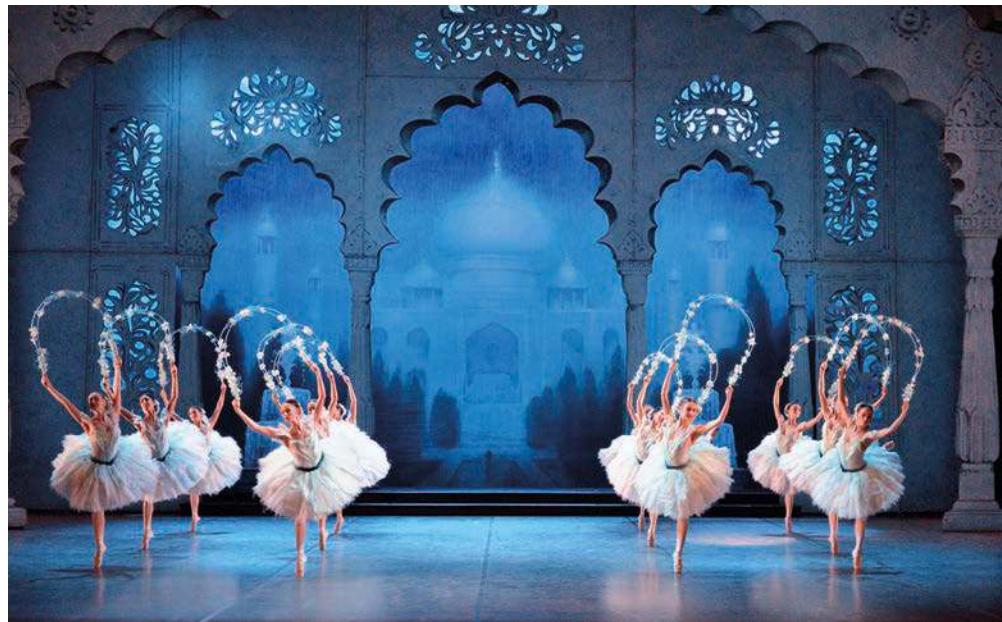
London's Royal Albert Hall this summer. Returning to the repertoire will be Anna-Marie Holmes' staging of *Le Corsaire* and Wayne Eagling's *The Nutcracker*, which will be presented on tour in the UK and during the company's annual Christmas season at the

Below: English National Ballet in *Le Corsaire*.

London Coliseum. ENB's 70th anniversary itself will be marked by three gala performances at the Coliseum between January 17 and 18, 2020, with works to be announced, but which promises to feature extracts from a diverse range of repertoire spanning ENB's history. 2020 will also see the return of ENB's Emerging Dancer competition, as well as an international tour of Khan's *Giselle* to Barcelona and Paris.

Joining the company as a guest artist during the autumn and winter season is Brooklyn Mack, who last

appeared with the company in *Le Corsaire* in 2016. ENB has also appointed its first medical director, Andy Reynolds, who joins from Harlequins Rugby Football Club where he was head of medical services. Reynolds will work to maximise the benefits of the company's new fitness and rehabilitation facilities, which include a gym, Pilates studio, hydrotherapy pool and treatment rooms. For further information about this, and other news about English National Ballet's forthcoming season, visit ballet.org.uk.



Hot to Trot

AN INTIMATE ACCOUNT of same-sex competitive ballroom dance, *Hot to Trot* is now available in the UK via Amazon and iTunes and DVDs of the film are now for sale.

The documentary follows the stories of charismatic Ernesto, a former meth addict from Costa Rica who strives for success and love; Emily, a lifelong type 1 diabetic, who has to wear an insulin pump to manage her disease; Nikolai, a dance champ who came out



Emily Coles and Kieren Jameson.

only a few years ago and longs for his Russian family's acceptance; and Kieren, who grew up in a conservative New Zealand military environment

and wrestles with how to balance career and commitment to dance.

Hot to Trot follows these dancers over several years, as their relationships develop and deepen, and the spectacle of the Gay Games – the pinnacle of same-sex competitive ballroom dance – approaches. After a year on the international film festival circuit, and a successful limited theatrical release in the US, *Hot to Trot* is now streaming around the world. For more information and to watch the trailer, go to hottotrotfilm.com.

New season at the Paris Opéra Ballet



THE PARIS OPÉRA BALLET has announced its new 2019–20 season, continuing its 350th anniversary celebrations this year with new productions and much-loved classics. Among the new works is *At the Hawk's Well*, a collaboration between Japanese visual artist Hiroshi Sugimoto – invited for the first time to the Paris Opéra – and choreographer Alessio Silvestrin, which includes dancers of the company. The new production will feature on a double bill with *Blake Works I*, William Forsythe's piece created recently for the Paris Opéra Ballet, which

The auditorium of the Palais Garnier.

is set to a selection of songs by the composer James Blake. Previews will run from September 19, with opening night on September 22 and dates running through to October 15.

October also sees acclaimed choreographer Crystal Pite reunite with the dancers of the Paris Opéra for a new work comprising a series of 60-minute performances divided into as many choreographed sequences. With music by Owen Benton, set design by Jay Gower Taylor,

costumes by Nancy Bryant and lighting design by Tom Visser, the work will run at the Palais Garnier from October 25 to November 23.

In 2020, Alan Lucien Øyen, choreographer and artist in residence with the Norwegian National Opera and Ballet, has been invited for the first time to choreograph for the Paris Opéra Ballet. Combining text and movement, the choreographer follows in the footsteps of the Tanztheater Wuppertal Pina Bausch, which commissioned a piece from him in 2018. The new work, which promises his usual sense of drama and theatre, will run from April 11 until May 18, 2020.

Created in 1978 for The Royal Ballet, Kenneth MacMillan's *Mayerling* makes its debut in the Paris Opéra Ballet repertoire on May 12, 2020, running until May 30. The three-act work delves into the family secrets and political intrigues of the Habsburg monarchy during the reign of Emperor Franz Joseph. MacMillan's theatrical production focuses on the tragic story of Crown Prince Rudolf, who commits suicide with his mistress Mary Vetsera at the hunting lodge at Mayerling. To the music of Franz Liszt, the choreography translates the fraught emotions of the characters.

Returning to the repertoire for the season are Rudolf Nureyev's staging of *Raymonda*, from December 2 to 31, 2019; Patrice Bart and Eugene Polyakov's version of *Giselle*, from January 31, 2020 to February 15, 2020; and Pierre Lacotte's recreation of the original version of *Coppélia* performed by pupils of the Paris Opéra Ballet School. For further details of the new season and to book tickets, visit operadeparis.fr.

News in brief

★ This month is a busy one at **Blackpool's Winter Gardens**. The WDC/ AL Open European Championships runs from April 19 to April 21, closely followed by the Junior Blackpool Dance Festival, where the best young dancers in the world gather each year to do battle, taking place from April 22 to 28. DS1 TV will be live streaming on April 20–21. For times and details go to dsi-london.tv.

★ **Journey Through Jazz**, a revived show by *Dancing Times* columnist Simon Selmon and his dance partner and wife, Anna Lambrechts, returns to London's Underbelly Festival this year on April 14. Suitable for adults and children alike, the show takes you on an odyssey of popular social dances from the 1900s to 1960s, stopping at various dances from the cakewalk, ragtime, Charleston, Big Apple, Lindy hop, hand jive and twist. Go to swingdanceuk.com for further details.

★ **Matthew Bourne's The Red Shoes** returns for a national tour that opens on November 18 at Theatre Royal Plymouth, before visiting The Lowry, Salford, from November 26, ahead of a seven-week Christmas season at Sadler's Wells, London, from December 3 to January 19, 2020. Further tour dates for 2020 and casting will be announced shortly – keep an eye on new-adventures.net.

New directors at NYCB

NEW YORK CITY BALLET (NYCB) and the School of American Ballet (SAB) announced on February 28 that Jonathan Stafford was to be the new artistic director of both the company and school, joined by Wendy Whelan as associate artistic director and resident choreographer Justin Peck as artistic advisor. A press statement from NYCB stated, "Stafford and Whelan will serve in a new management structure designed to ensure that one of the world's preeminent dance companies will continue to present performances of the highest artistic calibre while providing a supportive and nurturing environment for all of its artists, including more than 90 dancers and the 62-piece New York City Ballet Orchestra."

Stafford and Whelan are former long-standing dancers with NYCB, and

the announcement of their appointment was greeted with a feeling of relief in New York following the company's recent troubled history, which saw the departure of former ballet director Peter Martins, as well as the dismissal of a number of leading male dancers, amidst claims of bullying and inappropriate behaviour. More than 220 artists, employees and various stakeholders were asked for feedback from NYCB's Board prior to the search for candidates to lead the company. Stafford, who had already been serving in the role as one of the interim leaders since December 2017, took up his new position with immediate effect, whilst Whelan joined him later last month.

As artistic director of NYCB, Stafford will supervise all areas of the company's creative

operations, working closely with NYCB executive director Katherine Brown. He will also continue to teach company class and rehearse and prepare ballets for performance. In addition, as artistic director of SAB, Stafford will work closely with chairman of the faculty, Kay Mazzo, and SAB executive director, Carrie Hinrichs, to ensure that the most promising ballet students in the US have the training, resources, and guidance to develop into world-class artists and healthy, well-rounded individuals. Whelan's role will focus on conceiving, planning and programming NYCB's annual performance season; commissioning new work from choreographers, composers and other artistic collaborators; and working closely with NYCB's dancers in the rehearsal studio, both teaching class and

coaching numerous works in the repertoire. While Whelan does not take on a formal leadership role with SAB, she is expected to be a regular guest teacher there. At Stafford and Whelan's invitation, Justin Peck will work closely with both on ideas for programming and new commissions.

"For me, there are no more treasured institutions than New York City Ballet and the School of American Ballet," said Stafford.

"My time with the school and company began in 1996, and each year that I have spent here, I have grown as a person and artist. I have developed a deep appreciation for the organisations, their commitments to Balanchine, Kirstein and Robbins, and all of the people – past and present – who comprise NYCB and SAB. I am immensely proud to serve as artistic director, and to stand with Wendy Whelan to lead us forward."

Breakin' Convention

THE ANNUAL CELEBRATION OF hip hop, *Breakin' Convention* returns to Sadler's Wells over the May bank holiday. The festival, now in its 16th year, takes place on May 4–5, showcasing hip hop dance and theatre talent.

Hosted and curated by Sadler's Wells associate artist Jonzi D, the festival offers the chance to watch high-calibre breaking crews, innovative popping, creative krump and soulful house dance.

Olivier Award-winning Boy Blue Entertainment returns to the Sadler's Wells stage for the 15th time, as B-boy Junior, amongst YouTube's most watched b-boy of all time, teams up with Greek popper Kalliopi Tarasidou. Leading the way is all-female poppers AIM Collective and 16-year-old b-girl Logistx,



Above left: Logistx, who will be performing at the 2019 edition of *Breakin' Convention*.



Above right: The Locksmiths. rawest hip hop around." Attendees can experience hip hop culture throughout the Sadler's Wells building with a variety of taster sessions, workshops and free activities on offer.

WorX, a distinctive adults-only hip hop cabaret evening, kicks off the festivities on May 3 in the Lilian Baylis Studio, and Park Jam closes the long weekend with a free outdoor event suitable for families on May 6 in Spa Fields Park. For more information, go to breakinconvention.com.

whilst Joshua Nash and Jordan Douglas explore the concept of toxic masculinity with their krump duet.

Jonzi D said: "*Breakin' Convention* is back in the game for the 16th year running, and still just as exciting as the first. The festival is such a fantastic opportunity to see the best,



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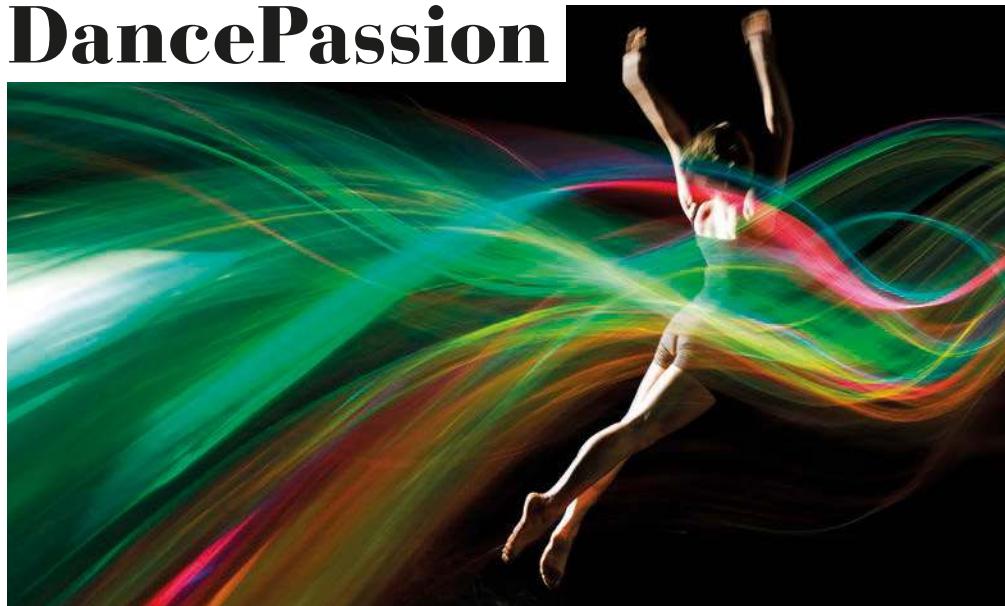
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DancePassion



A CELEBRATION OF THE UK's flourishing dance scene, *DancePassion*, a festival organised by BBC Arts in collaboration with One Dance UK, will run across television, radio and online on the BBC from March 31 to April 6, with a live streaming day on April 5. Involving the four UK nations, dancers, independent artists and choreographers will take part in live broadcasts from dance hubs located in Belfast, Birmingham, Leeds, London and Swansea.

Jonty Claypole, director of BBC Arts, said: "DancePassion is for audiences who love dance as well as for those who don't yet know they love dance. Whether it's ballet, bhangra or ballroom – at one of our hubs or at home – this week aims to get the whole nation moving in a celebration of dance."

As part of the live streaming day on Friday 5, the science of dance will take centre stage as Birmingham Royal Ballet conducts live experiments to demonstrate how 3D motion tracking is being used to push boundaries in choreography as well as protect dancers from injury. New research into how dancing can improve bone density will also be revealed.

There will be exclusive rehearsals and insights from some of the country's leading practitioners including Akram Khan Company, Candoco, Company Wayne McGregor, Matthew Bourne's New Adventures, National Dance Company Wales, Möbius Dance, Northern Ballet and Kenneth Tindall, Rambert, Rosie Kay Dance Company and Viviana Durante Company.

Plus, audiences will be given a front-row seat to English National Ballet

Above: Publicity shot for *DancePassion*.

and Scottish Ballet as they gear up for performances at Sadler's Wells and the Theatre Royal, Glasgow, respectively.

Additional live streams will come directly from companies themselves: Scottish Ballet will be in Glasgow to celebrate its 50th anniversary, and Rambert will bring audiences exclusive behind-the-scenes access to the full range of

able to dance basic figures in each dance.

No partner is required for this class in which dancers will be paired on the day. However, tickets must be booked in advance. Places are limited and allow an even spread of wheelchair users and standing dancers. The masterclass runs from 1pm to 3pm. Tickets cost £15 and hot and cold drinks are available to purchase at the dance studio on the day. For more information and to book, visit strictlywheels.co.uk.



Paula Moulton and Gary Lyness.

their work, featuring leading French choreographer Marion Motin.

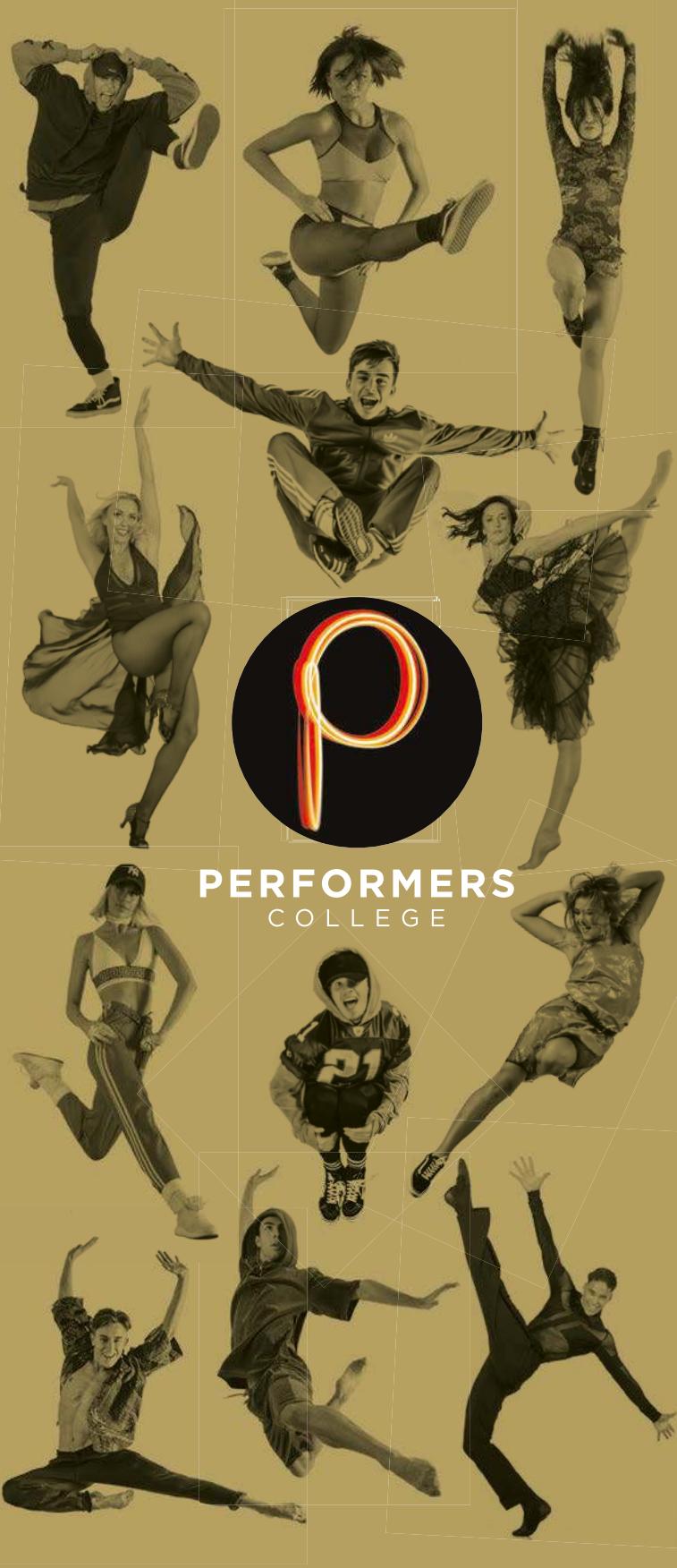
Ahead of the centenary of Merce Cunningham's birth, the Barbican will live stream *Not A Moment Too Soon* as Trevor Carlson, close friend and executive director to Cunningham, reflects on the 12 years he spent as a companion to the choreographer. Other highlights will include Silver, a new BBC streaming platform, being used by organisations to bring dance to a wide audience, footage from the BBC's dance archive telling compelling dance stories, performances of *Giselle* and *Atoms* on BBC Four, *Sound of Dance* on BBC Radio 3 and dance specials on BBC Radio 6 Music and BBC Radio 2, where a dance-themed edition of *Friday Night Is Music Night* will be presented by *Strictly Come Dancing*'s head judge and Queen of Latin, Shirley Ballas, along with *Strictly* stars Joe McFadden and Joanne Clifton. For more information on *DancePassion*, got to bbc.co.uk/dance.

Combi masterclass with Strictly Wheels

LEARN THE BASIC TECHNIQUES of ballroom and Latin Combi dance – performed by a wheelchair user and standing partner – with the UK's top Para Dance Sport couple Paula Moulton and Gary Lyness, known as Strictly Wheels, and international coach, Accurso Romeo.

The masterclass on April 7 at Romeo Dance Academy in Milton Keynes will cover the internationally recognised debutante competitive dances – the English waltz, quickstep and samba. Open to manual wheelchair users who are able to self-propel, the class is ideal for those with some experience, but beginners are welcome, too. Standing dancers, however, must be

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Civic Theatre
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SALE | 11 MAY
Waterside
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NEWBURY | 14 MAY
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Corn Exchange
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Zama Dance School

Dear Editor — My name is Andrew Warth and I am the director of the Zama Dance School in Gugulethu, Cape Town. Many years ago I trained at the Legat School of Russian Ballet when it was in Mark Cross, Tunbridge Wells, and I danced with companies in Germany before making my way down to Cape Town and the CAPAB Ballet in 1992. The 1990s were, of course, very turbulent in this country and I could never have foreseen that I would one day call this beautiful land my home. Fast forward 27 years and I find myself working in an environment that couldn't be any more different to my countryside upbringing in the UK.

Zama Dance School (a registered non-profit organisation) caters for up to 100 students between the ages of six and 17 years. We are in the heart of Gugulethu,

a black township close to Cape Town. It can get pretty wild here in the streets of "Gugs" and my South African colleague Leanne Voysey and I have become quite accustomed to driving through riots, burning tyres and road blocks in the name of ballet. Our students are taught ballet three times a week and are fed nutritious meals after their classes and rehearsals. Our students don't pay for class tuition, dance clothes, ballet shoes, costumes and meals as they are all sponsored by local government, organisations and individuals.

In one of your issues in 2018, a letter was published from Anita Rendel about Zama Dance School and our desperate need for an alternative water supply during what turned out to be the worst drought in Cape Town's recorded history. Thanks to Anita, the generosity of some of your

readers and the listeners of a local radio station we were able to raise enough funds to instal a huge water tank and our classes could resume. Also, because the letter was published as the Star Letter, we received a free 12-month subscription to the *Dancing Times*. It has become very popular here at Zama Dance School and I'm so grateful that my students have enjoyed the same publication that I read so many years ago. Many thanks from us all here at Zama Dance School. — Yours sincerely,

Andrew Warth
Zama Dance School

Isabela Coracy and Ballet Black

Dear Editor — How lovely to see Isabela Coracy on the cover of the February 2019 issue of *Dancing Times*, and also as Dancer of the Month. I have the film *Only When I Dance*, in which she appears, downloaded on

Above: Ten-year-old Emihle Damoyi, a student at Zama Dance School.

my iPad, so it was great to see some years ago that she had joined Ballet Black, a company I took class with when I was at university.

I have seen her dance a couple of times in the UK, but it is also wonderful to see the company, as a whole, go from strength to strength. — Yours sincerely,

Lauren Savage
Leeds

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I know we are all fed up to the back teeth with the word Brexit, but we do need to ask ourselves how and where dancing will fit itself into the public psyche and the market place after it happens.

There is so much talk at the moment about what may occur if the UK leaves Europe without a deal and the backstop agreement that when you listen to news reports from various organisations, sometimes it seems as though there may not be any life or civilization left after the end of March.

Without dragging us through the Brexit swamp, it's clear that the level of uncertainty and almost paranoid fear in the UK at the moment has reached epic proportions. Speculation is rife about what will happen after March 29, and you could virtually create a soap-opera-style television programme about the various goings-on that have occurred since the momentous Brexit referendum held back in 2016.

Maybe, with hindsight, there was a big opportunity for us, as dance teachers, to create the first Brexit musical: Theresa May playing the part of a dancing Cinderella, whilst being chased around the stage by a mixture of politicians, foreign bureaucrats, and an entire chorus line of the public wearing masks. In fact, let's go the whole hog and do it all on roller skates as well. In the background we could have an animated computer image of Nigel Farage wagging his finger.

Phil Meacham asks where ballroom and Latin American dancing fit after Brexit?

How the imagination runs riot, and there are some sides of me that wish *Spitting Image* were still on television today.

The painful truth with all of this is that, generally, we only turn our attention to matters that involve us most closely, and as a fraternity of dancers and dance teachers it's important we question where we will fit in after the UK leaves the European Union.

Perhaps one of our weaknesses is that we, in the ballroom and Latin American world, see dancing purely as a leisure sport, easily overlooked and generally unimportant to the people of the UK. This may be generated through our own lack of confidence. Who knows? I'm often heard to say we do not shout enough from the rooftops about the amazing product we are the custodians of.

We need, first of all, to remember that dancing is interesting and unique, and whilst being affected by economic turmoil it can, in many instances, be improved by such turmoil. Historically, it is claimed that dancing has always done very well in a recession, and I think this true for various reasons. Whilst people's leisure shopping list may be curtailed in the areas of conservatories, new cars, expensive holidays and so on, people still need their weekly "fix" in

order to carry on. Dancing is relatively inexpensive compared with most other activities on the market, and, more important, delivers unparalleled value. It's a product that lasts a lifetime and delivers instant escape from the chaos the world currently brings to us. Many other pastimes, whilst offering escapism – such as going to the cinema or theatre – do not give the benefits that dancing clearly does.

Dancing is also a traditional family activity, bringing husbands and wives together, partners, whether married or otherwise, and often entire families including children and grandchildren. It is unique in this area. As recessions and times of financial uncertainty begin to bite, we all work harder in order to pay the bills. This does, however, mean we seek to spend time with our families and enjoy good value leisure time, and dancing fits this gap in the market.

In addition, research also shows that during times of recession, mental health can suffer and there are increased instances of domestic abuse, rises in reports of criminal activity, and suicide figures also reach unprecedented levels. Dancing has the ability to help keep these figures under control, especially in the areas of mental health and depression. There are many studies at the

moment showing the health benefits of dancing, all of which are well documented (particularly in the regular health column published in this magazine), and I believe this forms part of the idea that dancing is brighter than it is given credit for.

There has been just one small question in my mind. I've often heard from my peers that, historically, dancing has always done fantastically well in a recession. However, have we elevated dancing into such a high value activity, that, in consequence, there could be a potential dip in things such as private lessons? I think classes may be larger, with people trying to take full advantage of the amazing service we have to offer.

So, my advice after Brexit will be to hold our heads up high, keep the faith, do what we do – after all we do it very well – and deliver a wonderful experience to the people who deserve better value time with their partners and families through an activity that will last them a lifetime. ■

HAVE YOUR SAY: We should very much like to hear your views on the subjects discussed here, on any of our other articles or reviews, or indeed on anything else dance-related that you feel strongly about. Please email letters@dancing-times.co.uk or post your letters to the address on page 4. Please note: the opinions expressed in this column are the author's own and are not necessarily shared by *Dancing Times*.

No one could have predicted, more than 30 years after his death, that the company that would play the most significant role in keeping alive the works of Frederick Ashton, one of the greatest choreographers of the 20th century, would be based not in the UK, his homeland and the country where he created his greatest ballets, but in the US, in a small city in Florida that faces out onto the Bay of Mexico. As The Royal Ballet – for whom Ashton was founder choreographer – continues to minimise his presence in the

ASHTON IN FLORIDA

Jonathan Gray sees a fine revival of a long-lost work by Frederick Ashton.

Photographs by **Frank Atura**



repertoire to just a handful of over-familiar pieces, one must turn instead to Sarasota Ballet if one is interested in becoming better acquainted with Ashton's choreography. There, you can obtain a sense of his extraordinary range and variety as a creator, and get the opportunity to discover unfamiliar works.

For its 2018-19 season, Sarasota Ballet presented six works by Ashton (twice as many as The Royal Ballet), including two not seen in over 30 years, and since 2007 the company, under the artistic direction of Iain Webb, alongside his wife and former ballerina, Margaret Barbieri, has staged in total more than 25 ballets by the master. Good as it was to see it revived again, *Varii Capricci*, presented in January and reviewed by Leigh Witchel last month, is a minor work in Ashton's canon, created late in his career as a vehicle for two of his favourite dancers, Antoinette Sibley and Anthony Dowell, but Sarasota

Above: Sarasota Ballet in Frederick Ashton's *Apparitions*.

Ballet's production of *Apparitions* was a much more significant occasion.

Created in 1936, the ballet's scenario – devised by the composer and conductor Constant Lambert, with whom Ashton had a fruitful collaboration – was based on the story behind Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*, although the music Ashton actually choreographed was an orchestration by Gordon Jacobs of piano works by Franz Liszt. Hinting at the psychological struggles of the characters of both Albrecht in *Giselle* and Siegfried in *Swan Lake*, works that had recently been staged in full by the Vic-Wells (now Royal) Ballet, in *Apparitions* Ashton tells of a Poet who, unable to complete a love sonnet, takes laudanum and dreams of his ideal woman. He sees the Woman in the Ball Dress dancing

in a fantastical ballroom, then dead upon a funeral bier and, finally, transformed into a wanton creature who, to his revulsion, pursues him in a cave. The Poet awakes and, stricken by what he has dreamt, kills himself.

Apparitions saw Ashton moving away from the delightful danced divertissements he had created before it, such as *Les Rendezvous* (although, of course, he would continue to make them throughout his career), working instead in a feverish, symbolic, gothic, highly romantic style that was, according to Mary Clarke in her book *The Sadler's Wells Ballet, A History and An Appreciation*, typical of the "soul-sick romanticism beloved of the young". With sets and costumes designed by Cecil Beaton, and some of the dresses made by the great costumier Karinska, *Apparitions* was at the time Ashton's most ambitious work, and also, according to Clarke, a ballet of "luxurious beauty" that surpassed "any other work in the repertory." Indeed, the £300 spent on *Apparitions* before it opened at Sadler's Wells on February 11, 1936, was a budget unheard of for the ballet under Lilian Baylis' management.

A huge success at its first performance, and not only for the performances of the leading roles by Robert Helpmann and the 16-year-old Margot Fonteyn, David Vaughan asserts in his book *Frederick Ashton and His Ballets* that *Apparitions* had "tremendous power, and further strengthened Ashton's claim to be taken seriously, rather than as a confectioner of amusing trifles." Indeed, the ballet's feverish, erotic themes, as well as its visually striking choreography and designs, was a significant step forward for Ashton, revealing in him a new

confidence in handling dramatic situations and complex, large-scale dances to serious music. For many, the ball scene, in particular, was considered a masterpiece of choreography.

The ballet was expanded in 1949 when the Sadler's Wells Ballet transferred to Covent Garden, but by then *Apparitions* was generally considered less successful, and slowly began to disappear from the repertoire (perhaps because it *had* become old-fashioned in a newly-emerging post-war world that was very different to the 1930s), although Ashton thought highly enough of the ballet to attempt to resuscitate it with London Festival Ballet in 1987 for Natalia Makarova and Peter Schaufuss. Despite much of the original choreography being faithfully restored to the stage with the help of the astonishing memory of Jean Bedells, sadly, the leading roles were miscast, the delicate Ashtonian essence of the ballet was considered missing, and *Apparitions* looked as if it would exist once more only in memories of those who had seen it.

As we all know, what once was thought old-fashioned changes with the times, and despite the fact that *Apparitions*, as performed by

Sarasota Ballet in 2019, looks of its period, the company also showed it to be a sophisticated, absorbing and choreographically rich creation, as stimulating, rewarding and valuable as the literature, music, art or the great black and white films of the 1930s. Appreciating its merits over three performances at the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall over the weekend of March 8 and 9, it was also possible to detect in the ballet countless instances of choreographic sequences and ideas on which Ashton would later expand and elaborate. One could also observe and appreciate the stylishness of Beaton's designs – in a sensitive recreation supervised by Birmingham Royal Ballet's Doug Nicholson – with the striking colours of his costumes contrasting against the white cloths and projected shadows of the sets. In addition, Beaton's black and white frontcloth scene showing a gothic library – inspired, surely, by Horace Walpole's house at Strawberry Hill – was superb.

An old ballet, however, cannot live by excavation alone, and so it was vital for the dancers of today to make *Apparitions* live. Sarasota Ballet did a tremendous job, and Webb was astute in casting dancers who were physically

Below: Marcelo Gomes with dancers of Sarasota Ballet in Act II of *Apparitions*.

unlike either Helpmann and Fonteyn. It was also something of a coup to secure Marcelo Gomes, the charismatic, world-famous Brazilian dancer, to appear as the Poet (he is now a regular guest artist with the company).

Handsome, dramatic, technically strong, emotionally intense, and a superb partner, Gomes was pivotal to the success of the revival, and he was especially good at portraying the Poet's growing confusion as the ballet progressed. (Incidentally, I wondered if Ashton had made changes to the Poet's choreography for Schaufuss in 1987, as some sequences of dances were of such filigree brilliance I doubted Helpmann could ever have performed them.) In the ballroom, a scene with an atmosphere both giddy and queasy, Gomes gasps in delight at the appearance of the Woman in the Ball Gown, searching for her amidst the other dancers like Ashton's Prince seeking Cinderella, but he shows disquiet when she seems to have no interest in him. Gomes here holds his body in curving angles that highlight the dandified stylisation of ➤



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the choreography, moving his arms in luxurious arcs as he bends his back deeply, most noticeably in a repeated sequence in a duet with the Woman.

Gomes' intensity grows as, in his dream, the Poet moves on through a snow-clad plain (which includes a ravishing dance for the Belfry Spirits, who fill the Poet's ears with the sound of chiming bells, and who perform in staccato, tick-tock movements that are a precursor of the corps de ballet sequences in *Scènes de ballet*), and then collapses in grief when he sees the Woman on a funeral bier amidst a grand procession of monks dressed in purple robes – a scene Ashton had perhaps based on an elaborate Catholic funeral ceremony he may have witnessed during his childhood in Lima.

Less convincing, choreographically and dramatically, was the confusing scene in the cave where, surrounded by people in flimsy red robes who dance with quivering limbs and shaking arms, the Woman, now wearing a hideous mask, attempts to seduce the Poet. He collapses in a faint after being lifted high and held in groupings that were reminiscent of works by Bronislava Nijinska, but this section of the ballet is lightweight, and even Gomes could not summon up the creeping sense of horror it requires to be really effective.

Nijinska's influence could be seen again in the epilogue when, after the Poet's suicide, the monks enter the library in a long line and hoist his dead body above them like a human



Above: Gomes with dancers of Sarasota Ballet in the Cave scene from *Apparitions*. Below: The Epilogue.

catafalque. With the sorrowing figure of the Woman seen at the side of the stage, like the Madonna, the ballet closes with another strong image seemingly drawn from Catholic iconography.

As the description above suggests, the Poet is the driving force in *Apparitions*, and Gomes, along with the rest of the cast, seemed to be pacing himself during the first performance, but they all brought the work into much greater focus at the matinée and evening shows on March 9. Sharing the role of the Woman was Victoria Hulland, all pretty innocence in the first cast, and Danielle Brown, sophisticated and alluring in the second. Both women

were poised and fluent, demonstrating that Ashton's choreography for the very young Fonteyn was as difficult and challenging as it was beguiling. The remainder of the cast have less demanding roles, but Richard House as The Hussar in the ball scene, Jamie Carter as the leading Monk and both Amy Wood and Ellen Overstreet as ballroom dancers were very fine in their supporting roles.

This revival of *Apparitions* (paired, incongruously, with George Balanchine's *Stars and Stripes*) fills a major gap in our knowledge of Ashton's choreographic development and, for this reason alone, Sarasota Ballet is to be congratulated. The ballet, however, is so much more than a mere gap-filler, because Sarasota Ballet has revealed it to be a superb, culturally significant evocation of romantic, gothic agony, a style highly popular in the middle years of the 20th century; the ball scene, in particular, is one of Ashton's finest sequences of dances, with swirling ensembles, and beautiful solos and duets that are perfectly attuned to Liszt's music. Moreover, *Apparitions* does something very rare in ballet at the time by placing the male dancer absolutely at the centre of everything.

Apparitions is too good a ballet to be allowed to disappear again, and it must now be seen more widely. In the meantime, there are exciting rumours circulating about what Webb has planned for future seasons by Sarasota Ballet, a company that, indisputably, truly honours the memory of Frederick Ashton. ■



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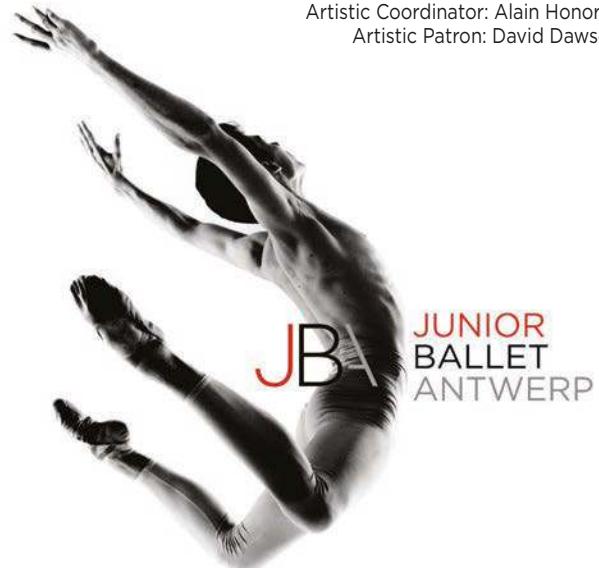
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PROGRESS IN PARAGUAY



If there was only one piece of good news for the Ballet Nacional de Paraguay (BNP), a contemporary ensemble consisting of just seven dancers that is part of the National Culture Secretariat, it is that it had auditions last month to add four more dancers into its ranks. The interim director, Víctor Rodríguez, was a dancer with the company when it was founded in 1992, when it was the privately-funded Compañía Paraguaya de Ballet; it became a national company in 2006.

At the present time, the company has no base of its own to train the dancers, despite a tight calendar of social outreach projects in the capital, Asunción, as well as in the interior of the country. Rodríguez explains that one of these, Opening Horizons, "fulfills the obligation of bringing art and culture to the frontiers to reinforce national identity, making dance accessible to all social sectors". A second programme, Danza Joven (Youth Dance), in which for ten days BNP engages in dance workshops, performances and debates in schools with the objective to form an audience. Last year, BNP connected with 3,200 children.

Another pillar of BNP's work is a programme of world premieres

In the conclusion to her exploration of dance in Paraguay, **Fátima Nollén** reports on the Ballet Nacional de Paraguay

performed both in Asunción and on tour, from September to November, where it shows its artistic potential. Rodríguez says that BNP is a small team: "We work together. We were close to disappearing at a point, but we got through it and we are competitive now. Our dancers are well prepared and can tackle any choreographic challenges because their technique is very good and they are versatile."

The company undertakes ballet classes with Diana Ivanauskas and contemporary classes with Wal Mayans, artistic director for the past four years who has also introduced classes on other styles such as capoeira and acrobatics. "We closed the 2018 season having reached an audience of 27,000 people, and we need to surpass that this year," Rodríguez continued.

BNPs dancers are often involved in the creation of new works, including the successful *La última letra*, which

explores the life of the Chaco War hero Emiliano Fernandez (a poet and musician). It was choreographed by dancers Hugo Rojas, Gloria Morel and Laura Cuevas, with artistic guidance from Mayans.

By definition, BNP is required to present a repertoire that identifies with Paraguayan culture, and so it often performs with the National Paraguayan Band, a group of folk musicians characterised by a lack of string instruments. This explains why BNP has works that explore local history, such as *Holocausto*, or about national identity in other works, including *Heka* (which means "search" in the Guarani language).

A dancer and actor who performed for 20 years in Italy, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland, Wal Mayans specialised in anthropological theatre with Eugenio Barba, became a disciple of Jerzy Grotowski, and won dance prizes in Japan and Spain. Mayans ensures BNP's dancers find "their own language of movement, something that comes from within themselves and is original, not copied. They can

Above: Dancers of Ballet Nacional de Paraguay in *Heka*.

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find their work within their own body, theatre and dance that lives inside them. The content is in the body."

Mayans has also set up an independent dance-theatre group, for which he secured an abandoned building at the National University, and invited BNP to train there until a decision is made about a promised new building for the company.

Most dancers, I discovered, teach in academies or workshops to complement their income. They also dance with other groups. Hugo Rojas, a dancer who joined BNP

Above: Ballet Nacional de Paraguay in *La Última Letra*. Inset: Miguel Angel Maidana. Below: Dancers of Ballet Nacional de Paraguay in *Trocito de Cielo*.

eight years ago, says: "We love what we do, no matter the conditions. We have blind faith that our situation will get better, and we have a loyal audience that supports our work."

In the meantime, Rojas also works with two other cultural associations:

Crear en Libertad (Create in Freedom), and Tercer Espacio Colectivo Artístico (along with Gloria Morel, a colleague from BNP), which uses contemporary dance and the arts for social projects or to further dancers' education respectively. In both cases they tour around Paraguay and to neighbouring countries.

Rojas reflects, "Maybe because we are hidden in South America, people never know what we do," but it's possible international attention on talent within Paraguay is beginning to grow. With a 2018 Prix de Lausanne under his belt, 19-year-old Miguel Angel Maidana joined English National Ballet as an artist this season following offers he also received from National Ballet of Canada and Birmingham Royal Ballet. Trained in his native Encarnación, in neighbouring Misiones in Argentina, and also in Brussels, Maidana has made headlines in Paraguay. "Taking class with Tamara Rojo, Alina Cojocaru and Isaac Hernández is an incredible and moving opportunity," he tells me. "I want to work hard to make Paraguay proud in the same way soloists Julio Morel [Compañía Nacional de Danza de Mexico] and Jiva Velázquez [Ballet Teatro Colón] have done too." Maybe we should all look more closely at Paraguay from now on. ■



BALLROOM BOY

Vincent Simone talks to **Nicola Rayner** about his new touring show with Ian Waite

Any chance to please the ladies!" jokes Italian dancer Vincent Simone when I ask about his new show *The Ballroom Boys*. "It was an idea that Ian Waite had," he goes on to explain. "It hasn't been done before that a pair of boys from *Strictly* get together to do a show – it's usually a couple. He asked me if I'd be happy to do something like that and, of course, I said yes. We're both involved with the making of it," he continues. "Ian has done his own shows before, while I've never done anything quite like this."

Best known for his long-term dance partnership with fellow Italian Flavia Cacace, Simone has starred in four very successful stage shows with her – *Dance til Dawn*, *The Last Tango*, *Midnight Tango* and *Tango Moderno* – and she has given this new project her blessing.

When I speak to him in late February, Simone and Waite have yet to start rehearsals. "We've had a few meetings about music, concept and ideas for the show through FaceTime and over the phone. I love his ideas of how to approach the show, the audience, choreography and so on.

"We've known each other for many years," he adds. "First, we were competitors, so we used to bump into each other at competitions, and obviously then we joined *Strictly Come Dancing* – he was in it from the second series; I started in the fourth – so we have been working together for a long time."

Are their personalities similar or different? "Well, we're both performers," muses Simone. "On stage we're going to be so different – I don't think you could get more opposite.

He's so tall, and I'm short; he's blond, blue-eyed, I'm dark. He's very flamboyant and I'm very flirtatious with the ladies, so the contrast will work beautifully together. People will get the best of both worlds."

Simone is looking forward to interacting with the public. The show is likely to feature a Q&A, as well as members of the audience coming up on stage to take part. "We're going to sit down and think of lots of stories to tell," he says. "People always like to hear them. So far, I've done my shows with Flavia, but they were more or less like musicals. We had a story; we were acting; we were dancing. I never had the chance to pick up the microphone or to connect with the audience, to look them in the eyes."

Waite will be partnered by the dancer Crystal Main, while Simone will pair up with Ksenia Zsikhotska, a professional on *Dancing with the Stars* in Ireland.

"I've danced with Flavia for 25 years," he says. "I've never danced with anyone else, so Ksenia will be my first partner since and I look forward to the challenge.

"She's a beautiful girl and the height is perfect, the look, too; she's dark as well. I look forward to working with her. Because I live in Northern Ireland, from March, I'm going to Dublin to rehearse with her – it's driving distance from me – and we're going to start putting some choreography together."

Vincent and Flavia are known for their spectacular Argentine tango. Does Ksenia have much experience with that dance? "She's done bits and bobs," says Simone, "but it will have to be a work in progress, creating something new. I have no doubts about her – and she's got me!" He adds: "When it comes to tango, I hate it when it's ballroomified, so I'd like to do the proper thing. However long it takes."

There are bound to be people coming along to see him in action with a new partner. "Exactly," he says. "I like a challenge... I've seen her perform

before and she's a brilliant dancer. It's a new energy. On *Strictly* I've danced with celebrities, but it's different with Ksenia as she's a professional."

Crystal Main will be another familiar face to ballroom fans as she's a regular on Brendan Cole's shows and has appeared on *Strictly* itself. "She's also a beautiful dancer and she's quite tall," says Simone. "So perfect for Ian."

The *Ballroom Boys* will feature "a mix of everything", notes



Simone. "Ian and I are ten-dancers. I don't like to stick to one style, because I've trained all my life to do both – sometimes I fancy a waltz, sometimes a cha cha. We'll go from a traditional top hat and tails to a passionate paso doble, so we'll have a full mixture to please different audiences. We'll have music by everyone from Michael Bublé and Ed Sheeran to the Rat Pack – a bit of everything. We've got an amazing singer, James Lomas, one of the original Billy Elliots when he was younger. He's a brilliant tap dancer, so we're happy we've signed him up."

As for the million-dollar question, will the Ballroom Boys dance together? "That will be a surprise, though I'm sure something like that might happen," Simone says coyly. "When we were on *Strictly* and I danced as a follower in ballroom with Anton

[Du Beke], James Jordan and Ian, they couldn't believe how good I was. Now they have a choreographer but before, in our time, each couple had to choreograph a group number for the live show. Sometimes I'd say, 'Let's try this step,' and try something with Anton, for example, as the girl, and they were impressed."

Is *Strictly* edging towards same-sex dance? "Ten million people will keep on watching it, no matter what," he says. "It's one of the most sold shows all round the world. I'm still surprised when I watch it how spectacular the group numbers are. I have to take my hat off to them:

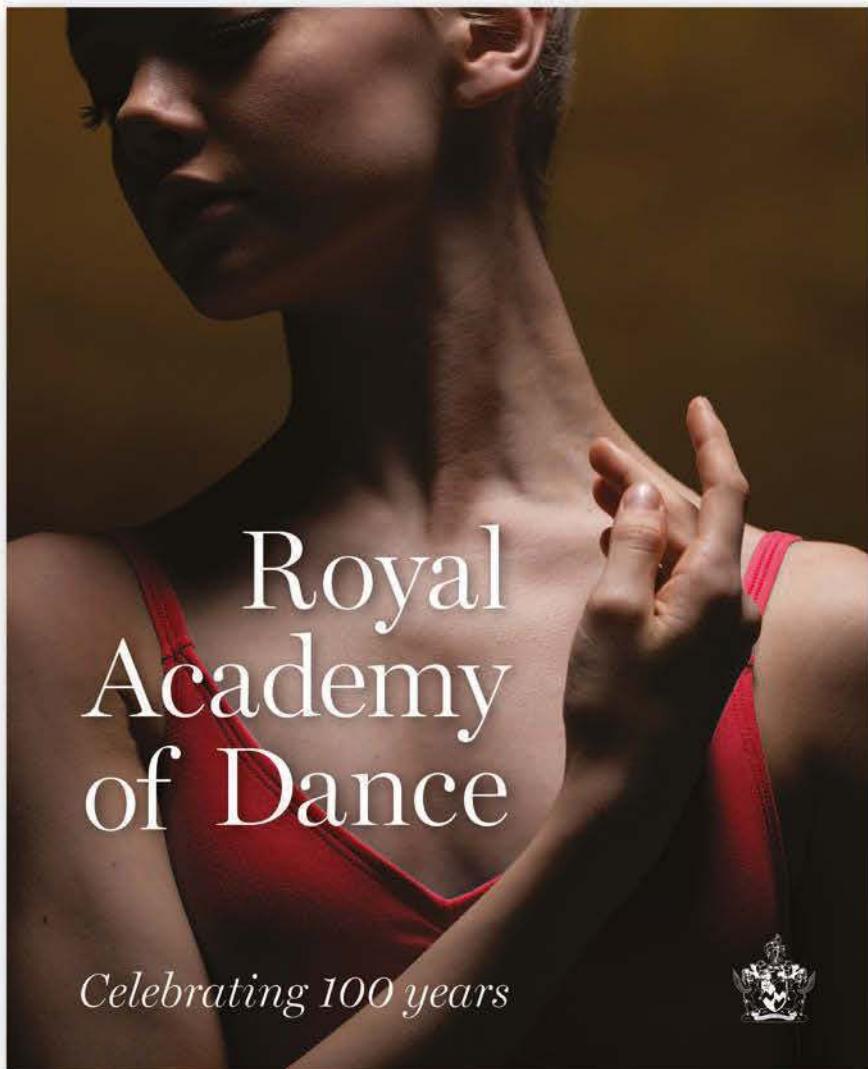
Jason Gilkison is doing an amazing job with ideas and concepts."

Does he miss it? "I appreciate it and I love watching it – but it's not easy to be part of it," he says. "It's 24/7. You have to be there at the right time of your life. I was a single guy and I made the most of it. With marriage and children, the time consumed to make the show takes over four or five months of the year. I'm glad I did it; I'll never forget, but now, no."

Simone married Susan Duddy in 2015 and the couple have two boys, Luca and Matteo. In 2017, he returned to choreograph the Argentine tango on *Strictly* for celebrities such as ➤



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Debbie McGee and Alexandra Burke. "That was a nice little job for me to have – it was very rewarding," he says. "What I loved the most was to be there teaching and then to get in the car and leave. To have that freedom: my job was done and I could go. The thought of staying there for the rest of the week: I'm glad I'm not doing that any more. It's hard work."

Although Flavia is currently taking a break from touring, the pair's partnership has endured. "We had eight years of touring and it was non-stop," he notes. "The long tours become painful and hard on your body. That's the problem. It doesn't mean she won't come back to it, but our tours are so long – they're never a month or two. One year, we did 27 weeks in a row. We decided to have a break from touring, but we've got shows booked – at corporate events and cruise ships – and we just finished a pantomime at the London Palladium, which was amazing. We did two numbers: it was probably the easiest job we've ever had."

The new show will tour from April 30 to June 30 and then return again in the autumn. "We're coming back in September and October, because there were complaints that we were leaving some of Ian's usual venues out," explains Simone. "It's a matter of two shorter tours. I asked Flavia if it was OK, and she said: yes, of course. In fact, she knows how much I love talking to the audience and flirting with the women. So, of course, I was perfect for the job."

Does his wife feel the same? "She's proud of me," he says happily. "She's come to see all of my shows. Obviously it's hard to be away for weeks on end. It hasn't been easy. Success comes at a price, but she's happy that it's a short tour – just two months."

At nine and five, his sons are now old enough to miss him, too. "Family is very important to me. I don't want to choose: I like to combine the two – family and career together – because I love them both."

The family has a house in Derry/Londonderry, as well as Spain and London. "We love travelling," says Simone. "As soon as the boys are off school, we go to Spain and they came to me twice in London during the



Previous page and above: Vincent Simone (right) with touring partner Ian Waite.

Palladium run. They love watching shows. They went to see *Mamma Mia!* and *School of Rock*. More than anything they love music: the oldest one plays drums and the little one listens to Queen and ABBA." How about dancing? "I tried some bits and bobs. The little one is more of a dancer, more of a show-off; the oldest one is more shy, but dancing is the hardest job you can ever have, so I'd rather not.

"I've been lucky," he adds. "I left Italy because of dancing and my mum suffered a lot when I left, but at least it paid off." His mother always travels to see his shows. "She has tears in her eyes as soon as the lights come up on stage."

As for his much-loved partnership with Cacace, he says: "I think it was just meant to be. We met in Guildford, through our teachers. When I tried with her, the teachers, husband and wife, looked at each other and

said: 'They're perfect together.' It's everything: we're both Italians; we both like the same music; we're both quite moody; we both fell in love with the tango... The connection we have is special. I think that's what people love the most: that when we dance together, we become one."

Simone says dance will always be a part of his life. "Sometimes, after a lot of work, I have a few weeks off. After three days, I want to go back to it, to put my dance shoes on and to perform. It's just something I have in me. As long as my body allows me, in any shape or form, I will still be involved. I loved choreographing the Argentine tangos on *Strictly...* and in the future, I'd like to do more judging and teaching competitors, but, at the moment," he concludes cheerfully, "it's all about me still." ■

The tour of *The Ballroom Boys* commences at the Albany Theatre, Coventry, on April 30. For further dates, go to theballroomboys.com.

BREAKING WITH TRADITION



Jonathan Gray talks to Ivan Putrov about his latest venture.

Photographs by **Britt Lloyd**

Later this month, Ivan Putrov, the Kiev-born dancer and former principal with The Royal Ballet, will be presenting a new show at the London Coliseum. Titled *Against the Stream*, it follows in the wake of his earlier, highly popular *Men in Motion* productions, and is intended to celebrate ballet's greatest pioneers – those who broke with tradition and helped change the face of dance. For *Against the Stream*, he has gathered together an impressive line-up of star names from across the globe that include Tyler Angle, Matthew Ball, Mathieu Ganio, Marcelo Gomes, Katja Khaniukova, Maria Kowroski, Joaquin de Luz, Hannah O'Neill and Dmitry Zagreben, as well as Putrov himself.

"*Against the Stream* is getting closer!" Putrov exclaims when we meet in central London to discuss the production. "It's a new project about male innovation in ballet that

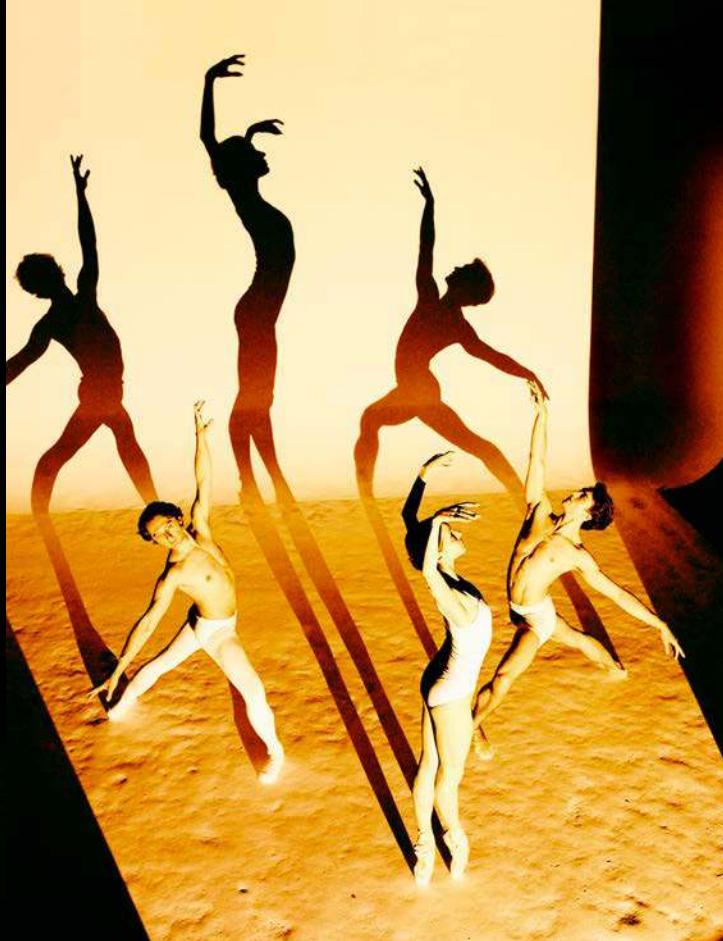
highlights the personalities whose influence changed the world of dance forever. I want to *celebrate* these people. They are usually choreographers who went 'against the stream', and although they might not be with us any more, their repertoire has survived and they constantly bring new discoveries to us. We continue to find new things in their dances, and they remain a draw and an inspiration for us today."

The programme Putrov has put together includes extracts from ballets by George Balanchine, Serge Lifar, Kenneth MacMillan, Rudolf Nureyev and Jerome Robbins. As an example of innovation, he cites Agrippina Vaganova's *Diana and Actaeon* pas de deux, a duet she added into Marius Petipa's *Esmeralda*, which will be performed by English National Ballet's Katja Khaniukova and the Royal Swedish Ballet's Dmitry Zagrebin alongside students from English National Ballet School. Created in Soviet times, the duet demonstrates the kind of changes that occurred in Russian ballet during the 1930s, changes in which Vaganova

was heavily involved, especially in the way dancers were trained.

"*Diana and Actaeon* is a demonstration of what was happening in Soviet Russia at the time – big, powerful jumps, a technique almost unseen before then, and a new vocabulary of movement," says Putrov. "Dmitry comes from a new generation of Bolshoi-trained dancers, and it's very exciting for me to see him dance this work because, like him, I was originally trained in the Vaganova method. In fact, my mum [Natalia Berezina-Petrova] was also trained by Vaganova students, and she was the first person to dance *Diana* in Kiev when she performed it for her graduation. Katja, who is from Kiev as well, has asked mum if she can coach her in the role," he adds with a smile. Like his mother, Putrov's father, Oleksandr Putrov, was a dancer with the Ukrainian National Ballet, so there is ballet history running through the blood in his veins.

In his formative years, Putrov studied locally at the Kiev State Choreographic Institute, but then went to The Royal Ballet School in London at



the age of 15 after winning the Prix de Lausanne in 1996. He joined The Royal Ballet in 1998 following his graduation from the school along with Marianela Nuñez [“It’s been wonderful to see how she has developed as a ballerina”], and went on to dance many leading roles, including all the classics. He was particularly noted for his performances in Glen Tetley’s *Pierrot Lunaire* and Balanchine’s *Prodigal Son*, roles that highlighted Putrov’s individuality as a dancer, as well as his sensitivity as an interpretive artist. He later decided to go his own way, leaving the company in 2010 and collaborating with the Pet Shop Boys and Javier De Frutos at Sadler’s Wells on a full-length dance production of *The Most Incredible Thing*.

“I got a bit tired of the *Swan Lakes* and *Nutcrackers*,” Putrov tells me, “so I was happy to go and do something new. I would like to do *The Most Incredible Thing* again, as I had a wonderful two or three years working on that show. Having a ballet made on you is very special, but when I was performing with The Royal Ballet, I was also lucky to hear stories direct from the dancers who had worked with Frederick

Above: Ivan Putrov (left) with Katja Khanukova and Matthew Ball in publicity shots for *Against the Stream*.

Ashton and Kenneth MacMillan. Good coaching is so important, as it keeps the tradition going. At the time, I was working with the legends of The Royal Ballet, and through them you could hear the voices of the choreographers. I think that’s the only way you can really keep the beauty and nuances of the original creation intact.”

Putrov appreciates dancers from other companies around the world who have also benefited from the same kind of insights and experiences he gained with The Royal Ballet, and who now have a similar outlook to him on dance. “I’m so fortunate I’ve been able to gather a great cast who have all expressed an interest in this new programme. New York City Ballet principal Maria Kowroski will dance the duet from Balanchine’s *Diamonds* with Tyler Angle and she will also be in Robbins’ *In G Major* with Marcelo Gomes – I’m incredibly lucky the elite of the dance world want to come to London and work with me.”

“Mathieu Ganio, an étoile with the Paris Opéra Ballet, will appear in Serge Lifar’s *Suite en blanc*, which has such a French style, and Rudolf Nureyev’s *Cinderella* alongside premier danseur Hannah O’Neill. The Royal Ballet’s Matthew Ball is dancing with us, too. I really appreciate Matthew’s curiosity as a dancer. You know, I see how so many people in dance can become an extension of their gadgets, but Matthew isn’t like that at all – he plays music and he reads; Marcelo is the same. It’s much more appealing to work with people like them who have a wider view of life. In a way, with my producer’s hat on, I get such a thrill setting up the show; it’s the same kind of rush you get when you are performing.”

Against the Stream is a continuation of Putrov’s aim to make male ballet dancers more prominent in the eyes of the general public. “I’m a ballet fan,” he concedes, “but when I began *Men in Motion*, I was sort of saying that male dancers are exciting. For years and years, female dancers were seen as the essence of ballet, but now the male figure in dance has caught up with them. There have been exciting developments for men in recent years, and now they can also be the centre of attention. They can be androgynous or super athletic, and men can dance with other men on stage, which is an exciting move. We are starting to get more of a sense of equality in dance right now, with things like gender fluidity coming to the fore, and I think the strength of the world is its variety; we should be embracing that variety, as we need to stay as open as possible.”

Like *Men in Motion*, which, after playing in London, toured to Italy, Poland, Russia and Ukraine, Putrov hopes this new project will enjoy a similar longevity. “We can tour this around the world! *Men in Motion* had so many reinventions and *Against the Stream* can have the same kind of life. With artists like these, all at the top of their game, audiences will be able to discover that men can play a great part in the world of dance.” ■

Against the Stream, A Gala Night Celebrating Ballet’s Greatest Pioneers is at the London Coliseum on April 7. To book tickets, visit londoncoliseum.org.

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PHOTOGRAPHY BRITT LLOYD

On the move

Graham Watts meets Christiana Stefanou, a ballet master for the 21st century.
Photographs by Altin Kaftira

It might be easier listing the ballet companies where Christiana Stefanou has not taught. Regular glimpses of her Facebook page will generally identify new, temporary locations while she guest teaches around the world.

Stefanou graduated from the State Academy of Munich and her career as a dancer was almost exclusively with the Bayerische Staatsoper. Nowadays, she returns to Munich regularly, to coach at her former company, but just as often she might be found in Budapest, Prague, Amsterdam, Stockholm, Boston, Rome or other cities where major ballet companies reside. Home is Athens, where Stefanou was director of ballet at the Greek National Opera in 2010 (succeeding Irek Mukhamedov), although it is on the island of Crete where we met to discuss her career.

Stefanou's passion for ballet is infectious, which must be the first attribute of any great teacher. "For me, ballet is like breathing," she explained. "I was blessed to be able to dance, to direct a national company, to choreograph and to teach, but, if I couldn't do any of those things, I would be doing costumes, or whatever I could to enjoy being part of ballet. I could be content just being in the audience."

Teaching came to her while still performing. "Girls would ask me for advice about a new role or for auditions, so it seems I have been coaching my whole life. When I left Munich and came back to Athens, I had a choice to become principal dancer or ballet master. Even though I still had some years left to dance, I chose the latter because I always wanted to teach." That was 17 years ago and Stefanou still appears as if she could dance as *Giselle* tomorrow.

I asked what makes a good ballet teacher. "It starts with the talent to



Above and overleaf: Christiana Stefanou teaching at Dutch National Ballet.

understand what a dancer needs and how you can help discover their best qualities," she replied quickly. "Of course, all teachers feel safe within their knowledge, and that is essential, but you also need to understand your dancers; their needs and emotions. They are artists with sensitive ways of being and good coaching is not just knowing the right correction for that dancer but when is the right moment to give it".

Jiří Jelínek, formerly a principal with Czech National Ballet, Stuttgart Ballet and National Ballet of Canada, is also forging a career as a guest ballet master, and he explained his experience of Stefanou's teaching. "We first met in Prague when Christiana came to take class and what I liked most was her energy. Her classes are never too complicated, she is funny, gives good corrections and she encourages dancers to find themselves."

Stefanou's teaching focuses on musicality. "Just as music has coloratura, rallentando, accelerando, forte, pensoso and so on, these are ➤

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also the ways in which a ballet body should move in relation to that music. When I teach, I want the dancers to feel the music, which is the sign of how the movement should be interpreted. I have tried to develop my own style but this doesn't mean I have jumped away from the academic formality of gradually building a class."

Referring to national styles, Stefanou explained that her mentor, Ray Barra, the US-born dancer who worked extensively with John Cranko at Stuttgart Ballet, used to say her classes created a hybrid "Western European" system. "Growing up in Greece did not give me the opportunity to develop a national style, so that meant I absorbed all kinds of formative influences from my teachers who had themselves come from Vaganova or the Paris school. I had a teacher from Rosella Hightower's Academy, in Cannes, which was completely international. I spent time at the opera house in Sofia, being trained by Russians and Bulgarians heavily influenced by the Bolshoi, and then I completed my training in Germany where we had amazing masters from Russia, Poland, France and elsewhere. Not having teachers from one system was a great blessing, which has stayed with me."

Fávio Salamanka, a dancer with Salzburger Landestheater, also spoke to me about his experiences of being coached by Stefanou. "I first met Christiana in 2007 when she came to my company in Karlsruhe to help stage Ray Barra's *Carmen* and I took her class. Nobody knew who she was but she was a breath of fresh air for the whole company. Since that time, she has helped mentor my career."

I wondered why he had remained close to this particular teacher for more than a decade, particularly when they had never been part of the same company? "Ballet masters can often be reserved. They teach and they go away. Christiana has a strong connection with today's dancers. She takes a long-term interest in anyone that comes her way."

What makes her teaching so special? "Many teachers just follow the technique, the method, but she follows what the dancers need. Mostly, it is help with flexibility or timing and she focuses her coaching on those individual needs. How can you stretch



more? How can you improve this movement? She brings new thoughts and ideas even to the most experienced dancers. We were all trained in distinct methodologies and when we get teachers ingrained in those methods, they will stick to their discipline, and this doesn't always work for some dancers, because their bodies have been trained in a different way. Christiana is special because she has found a way to be truly international in her teaching. She has a wealth of knowledge about national styles and understands each tradition well. So, she takes the best of everything and brings it to her classes, moulding this international style to fit each dancer's individual needs. On top of this, she also brings an incredible motivational energy to her class, which has a refreshing effect upon tired dancers in the middle of a hard season."

Jelínek is a fan of the burgeoning phenomenon of itinerant guest teaching. "It's very smart because teachers come from different places, with different traditions and they can give a company a new look. Familiarity means that a company's own ballet master can get used to dancers' individual habits but when someone new comes, they see these flaws with fresh eyes and can suggest solutions. So, it can be very refreshing. Most companies now have several contracts for guest teachers during a season and it's a good thing."

"I believe the need for knowledge never stops," concludes Stefanou. "However long we live, we learn. Teachers should never make a

remark without giving advice. To get a correction should be seen as a prize and I always try to give each dancer in my class at least one private correction; although I prefer to see it as a tip, which is a better expression. I don't like to remark; I want to give solutions. I believe dancers improve much faster this way because it is never about making them feel bad; it's about helping them look better. I learn from dancers, every day. A good class is where we exchange knowledge. They are professional artists and this mutual transfer of information is as vital to my development, as theirs."

Although Stefanou travels the world as a ballet master, her heart belongs to Greece. Our conversation ended by returning to the reason for meeting in Crete, where she had hired the open-air Garden Theatre in Heraklion for two evenings, presenting a ballet gala with an international cast of dancers. "This is a big island of half a million people but there is no opera house and so the public don't see performances, although the ballet schools are full of keen, young people. It's a problem all over Greece. There used to be a second opera house in Thessaloniki but that is now closed."

Reintroducing ballet to a broader public across Greece is another passion Stefanou is pursuing relentlessly with significant investment of her own money and time. Those Cretan performances were part of a much bigger programme that included visiting local schools to give classes, proving that once a teacher, always a teacher. ■

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CHAMELEON ROSE



Jürgen Rose, designer of Stuttgart Ballet's new production of *Mayerling*, talks to Paul Arrowsmith

For his first season as artistic director of Stuttgart Ballet, Tamas Detrich wanted a big new production. He saw Kenneth MacMillan's *Mayerling* as the opportunity to reunite Jürgen Rose with the company where he first worked, nearly 60 years ago. Rose's designs include John Cranko's *Romeo and Juliet* and *Onegin*, as well as John Neumeier's *Lady of the Camellias* and *The Sleeping Beauty*, staged by Marcia Haydée. All are cornerstones of the Stuttgart repertoire, but Rose, who had not designed a ballet for over 25 years, declined and demurred for several months. Enter Haydée: "I'll ask him. I'll tell him."

Rose relented, telling me: "I was unfamiliar with *Mayerling* as a ballet

but Rudolf's story exists in Germanic consciousness quite as much as Ludwig II's. I have never done a piece that was so documented in newspapers or photographed. That all helped." As with MacMillan's *Anastasia*, Rose notes: "We know more history now than when Kenneth made the ballet. Mary [Vetsera]'s last letters were found only recently, hidden in a safe since 1926. My starting point was to design *Mayerling* solely in black-and-white, like a documentary."

His research took Rose to Vienna, three times to Mayerling itself. "He is, in the most positive way, obsessed with Rudolf, Mary, the Hofburg, Sissi [Empress Elisabeth] and swept through Vienna, where all doors were opened to him, even those through which we mere mortals are not allowed to pass," says Vivien Arnold, Stuttgart Ballet's director of communications. Rose's purpose, as with Giuseppe Verdi's opera *Don Carlos*, directed and designed by him in Munich, is not to put

historicism on stage but to comprehend the milieu of the protagonists.

Christian Blank, who with Moritz Haakh, is assisting Rose on *Mayerling*, observes: "Jürgen starts with all-embracing research but his attention to detail is often misunderstood. It's curious that his costumes and sets look so detailed on stage. Jürgen's designs aren't any more detailed than anybody else's but result from an intensive sifting of everything collected during the research, distilling it to the minimum that's needed to tell – and understand – the story."

Mayerling has been redesigned before, by Pedro Núñez in 2013 for Haydée's Ballet de Santiago, a staging seen too in Houston (see *Dancing Times*, November 2017). For its premiere by The Royal Ballet in 1978, designer Nicholas Georgiadis leant on visual metaphor. Inert, costumed mannequins ➤

Above: Two of Jürgen Rose's models for Kenneth MacMillan's *Mayerling*.

in Elisabeth's apartment conveyed the stifled relationship with her son, Rudolf. "What was missing was the feel for these individuals as people, their interests, their own personal flair," says Rose. Appreciating Elisabeth's love of equestrianism and calisthenics, his design for the scene includes an exercise machine and portraits of her on horseback. An habitué of auctions and markets, Rose has sourced furniture of the period. Scene painters, costume and prop makers around the world attest to Rose's unwavering eye for detail and demand for excellence. "It's not pastiche," he says. "It's important to get the details right."

In doing so, Rose says, however: "If Kenneth were alive still, I would discuss with him and perhaps ask if it were possible to clarify the action in one or two scenes." While Rose did not know *Mayerling* he knew its choreographer. The two had neighbouring flats when MacMillan was director of Berliner Ballett. Rose designed two ballets for MacMillan's first programme in the city in 1966, the perennial *Concerto* and an ephemeral *Valses nobles et sentimentales*.

Rose's research for *Mayerling* convinces him that Rudolf's most important relationship was with Mitzi Caspar, in his view something not evident in the ballet. He also questions the motivation of the prime minister, Taafe, and police in the tavern. Rose hopes to place the Hungarian officers more clearly in context by incorporating



Above left and below left and right: Costume designs for the Ballroom Scene and the Royal Hunt. Above right: Jürgen Rose in a costume fitting with Friedemann Vogel (as Crown Prince Rudolf) and Elisa Badenes (as Mary Vetsera).

separatist propaganda in his scenery. Rose's sets are shaped by the spatial geometry of the choreography but visually have the look of etchings. He drew each room by hand. These drawings were subsequently printed not painted, ("absolutely new for me"), and can be lit to appear translucent, suggesting Rudolf is being observed from the shadows.

The effect of transparency, generated by the lighting, is a technique familiar from Rose's work for Neumeier. Applied to *Mayerling*, he says: "The scenery fades out so we see only the choreography at key moments. The strength of Kenneth, the strength of *Mayerling*, is that every act has a

bedroom pas de deux. Those scenes are modern, timeless. In these scenes I want the rooms to fade away so that these private moments carry even more weight. The purpose of design is to show the performers. Design serves the art form. That is what I have learned in a career spanning 60 years."

Born in 1937, Rose is the son of a farmer. His first experience of theatre was when, as a ten-year old, his grandmother took him to see Richard Wagner's *Tannhäuser* and *Der fliegende Holländer* in Dessau, operas he designed later at Bayreuth. Rose admits: "I wanted to be an actor originally but ended up becoming a designer." His early designs were for plays and operas in Ulm and Munich, where he worked with August Everding and Dieter Dorn, directors who became frequent collaborators. Concurrently with realising *Mayerling*, Rose revisited his designs for Wagner's *Ring* cycle in Geneva last month, directed by Dorn.

Although Rose has directed operas himself, he says: "At my age, most probably never again. When I direct I fight against myself as a designer. I start with a visual idea but a director's job is to manage the situation on stage with singers. You have very lonely moments as a director. What I bring to *Mayerling* is what I learned by working on so many plays with so many great directors, the major part of my career. There are lots of little stories in *Mayerling*. It is my job to animate them. What a wonderful job!"

Rose's breakthrough was a chance meeting with Cranko, in the canteen under the stage at Stuttgart: "My luck!" That was 1961 when Rose was in town to design Shakespeare's *As*



You Like It. Cranko ("curious about everything") asked to see Rose's work and immediately asked him to design *Coppélia*. Prevented from doing so by a management unwilling to risk somebody untried, for his next major production a year later, Cranko insisted on Rose. *Romeo and Juliet* not only consolidated Cranko's position in Stuttgart but established the company's international reputation – and Rose's own.

"I researched the painters of the renaissance. There was no internet then, of course, so I had to make black-and-white photocopies from books, a Deutsche Mark at a time. First I made free-hand sketches for John; then mathematically precise technical drawings for the bridge and stairs [key elements of the staging]. I was very proud," says Rose. In response: "John ripped my drawings apart. 'Do it again freehand,' he told me. 'I want to see your brush strokes.' He sat next to me until I had redrawn everything. John would throw you in the water but he would never let you drown. I learned so much from him."

Cranko learned from Rose, too. When he created *Poème de l'extase* in 1970, for Margot Fonteyn as diva reliving her memories, much of its fin de l'époque perfume came from Rose's evocation of Gustav Klimt, an artist unfamiliar to the choreographer. A year later, Cranko directed Franz Lehár's operetta *Die lustige Witwe* (*The Merry Widow*). He told Rose, "You gave me Klimt, now go and discover Paul Poiret." Rose accoutered the cast in the style of the early 20th-century fashion designer, with a dash of Erté for the scene chez Maxim. The lavish designs, including a 70-metre travelling cyclorama, gave Rose a reputation for excess. "It cost 300,000 marks. That would be nearly one million Euros now," says Arnold, "but it paid for itself within two years. The same with Haydée's *Sleeping Beauty*. It was expensive but recouped its costs."

Gesine Völlm recalls watching that same production from backstage. "I saw the girls' richly embroidered tutus. This was embroidery that did not disappoint on closer inspection. It seemed to originate from another time, when embroiderers would stitch for months just to make one piece of clothing for their noble customers. It

couldn't have been done any better." Haydée, the original Tatiana in *Onegin*, remembers: "It was very clear Jürgen was a perfectionist. He would not stop until each costume was exactly how he wanted. From him I learned so much about what would make me look my best." When Alina Cojocaru describes Tatiana's brown dress, from the final scene, as her favourite, Rose laughs: "The inspiration for that was Christian Dior's 'New Look' but why brown?!" For Cojocaru: "Jürgen's costumes add to the magic of creating a role. I'm so grateful to find myself on stage in a world of his creation."

The impact on Völlm was profound: "I was thunderstruck. That same evening [of *The Sleeping Beauty*], I wrote to the man responsible for those designs and told him I wanted to study in his class at Stuttgart's fine arts school. [Rose was professor of stage design there for 27 years.] Jürgen was a dedicated teacher, very demanding. He took us to New York, when he did *Elektra* and *Tristan und Isolde* at the Met. He pushed us through the doors of famous bars and nightclubs, MoMA, the New York Hells Angels. He organised tickets, for Broadway shows and Off-Off Broadway venues with 50 seats. Jürgen was always curious, infusing us with his thirst for new impressions, watching the world as a stage and inspiration for his – and our own – work," says Völlm. She subsequently designed costumes for Verdi's *Les Vêpres*

siciliennes at Covent Garden: "When I found myself working in theatres Jürgen told us of or took us to, I could hardly believe how far he had driven me, with his glowing passion and unceasing attention for detail in every respect of theatre – and life."

Blank agrees. "As Jürgen's assistant, you are involved in every part of his thoughts from the first day onwards. You are totally allowed, even invited, to share your ideas. Of course it is his work, but you feel absolutely involved and needed 100 per cent." Rose has always encouraged his protégés to find their own visual identity. "My credo has always been not to make little Roses. When I want to grow roses, I do so in my garden in Bavaria. Flowers are a meditation for me, my inspiration."

Rose himself is a chameleon. His work resists easy identification. "I can always devise three of four different ways of designing any show," he says. For Haydée's *The Sleeping Beauty*, Desiré was a conventional balletic prince, but for Neumeier, he was a young man in jeans. Rose concludes: "The impetus depends on the partnership with your collaborators. That's why designing *Mayerling* without Kenneth is very difficult, without a dialogue. I wish he was still here with us." ■

Stuttgart Ballet's new production of *Mayerling* opens on May 18. Visit stuttgart-ballet.de for further information.





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UP THERE

English
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Laura Dodge speaks to Carlos Valcárcel, English National Ballet School's new director of dance, about balancing academic and vocational training, fears around Brexit, and his aim to make the school the first choice for international ballet students

Founded in 1988 as a feeder school for English National Ballet (ENB), English National Ballet School (ENBS) is celebrating several exciting developments. This year is its 30th anniversary, and it moves to a purpose-built 93,000-square-foot home alongside the company on London City Island in July. It has also recently seen a change in direction, with former Stuttgart Ballet and Balletto di Toscana dancer Carlos Valcárcel taking over the helm at the start of the 2017-18 academic year.

"It's very exciting to be here," Valcárcel says. "With the new building, there is so much potential to grow and collaborate with the company. English National Ballet is really flourishing. Wherever you are in the world, you're

hearing about it, and there's lots of demand for ENB to perform. Tamara Rojo is doing an amazing job. It was this excitement about the company that made me want to work with English National Ballet School.

"In the new building, students will be able to take an elevator ride up and down to work with the company, saving time and making everything much easier. Artistic staff from ENB can come and teach ENBS workshops and classes. There's also a big balcony where students can watch the company rehearse. Being altogether will enable students to grow even stronger.

"I had done expansion work before with The School of Ballet Arizona, including moving to a new building. I'm excited to do the same here, and also to bring the school up to the same high level as the company. ENBS is already very established and has been running for over 30 years, but I want it to have even more interest and impact."

Valcárcel's first year as ENBS director of dance was a success, with 100 per cent of the third-year students gaining contracts before graduation, including four joining ENB, and a long waiting list for first-year places. He now plans to increase the school's international reputation and make it a first-choice

Above: Carlos Valcárcel leading a class at English National Ballet School.

training institution for ballet students around the world. To this end, he's increasing the number of international auditions and planning a more substantial summer intensive course.

Having previously worked in ballet schools in Europe, the US and Japan, Valcárcel was already extremely experienced, but has found it challenging to balance the UK's unique focus on academic studies alongside elite dance training. At ENBS, students work towards a level five or six Trinity College London diploma, with subjects including dance history, anatomy, Benesh notation and performance psychology.

"Balancing the academic programme with a high level of ballet is difficult," he comments. "We're trying to train thinkers and dancers – who can get both a diploma and a job at the end. There's no such thing as a perfect timetable, but I've tried to make the schedule more consistent, with clearer blocks of learning. I think that when dance classes are split with academics in the middle or vice versa, the body and brain don't function in the best way. So now ➤

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Carlos Valcárcel





we're timetabling clear blocks of dance or academic work so students know exactly what to focus on."

English National Ballet School has an international style, with teachers from all over the world. Valcárcel aims to give students a "universal training, without forgetting British values". He believes the school incorporates the best aspects from all of the major classical training methods, which helps students meet the demands of today's ballet companies.

Valcárcel is proud ENBS trains individuals and doesn't have a set body or student type: "We like students for who they are. Dancers need to fit in with a corps de ballet but it's also vital for them to grow individually.

"What's important is having all of our teachers on the same page. Of course they're teaching differently, but they need to be saying the same thing. All ENBS teachers are now having a weekly meeting to discuss things and learn from each other.

"One timetable change I made was to include three hours of training at a time. I laugh now as everyone's on board, but staff were very hesitant and scared about the idea when I first suggested it. This doesn't mean having three-hour ballet classes without a

break. It means that teachers have freedom – they have the opportunity to work on whatever they want. I think it's very important to evaluate students daily and react and do what they need at that moment."

This is particularly important in what Valcárcel describes as an increasingly tough market, with graduates struggling to get long-term contracts and good salaries: "You used to graduate, join a company, get paid and that was it. Now there are different ways to get work, often as a trainee or apprentice. It's a real challenge to ensure graduates get the right kind of work."

As well as challenges in terms of contracts, the school's international student body means that Valcárcel fears the impact of Brexit. "We are shaking!" he exclaims. "There's a big question mark around what will happen.

"I hope that, in the worst case scenario, students will just need a visa to train here. It will be really sad if Brexit means we can't continue doing the same work. We have lots of students from the UK, Europe and further afield – and everyone benefits from the school being international."

Valcárcel is also aware of the need to increase diversity: "Our auditions are open to everyone, but very few people from ethnic minorities apply.

Main image: Carlos Valcárcel with students of English National Ballet School.
Inset: Carlos Valcárcel.

We went to Mexico and had 500 students audition there, which was great. I want to do more of that.

"We are looking for talent. I want to help anyone who wants to dance and has the capacity to do so. I think there needs to be more done to encourage diversity in ballet training before the age of 16, which is when we take on our students. In our new building, we plan to develop our junior programme and outreach work. It's the school's vision to bring ballet to everyone, just as ENB does."

As well as its upcoming move to east London, other exciting events in the school's calendar include the second-year tour of *My First Ballet: Sleeping Beauty*, and the third-year joining ENB for Christopher Wheeldon's *Cinderella*-in-the-round at the Royal Albert Hall. Valcárcel is also thrilled that the school has been invited to perform at Youth America Grand Prix: "All of the top international ballet schools are performing, including ENBS. That's where we want to be – up there with the world's best schools. We want to make ENBS *the* place to train." ■



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The flight of Terpsichore



In the final part of his series on Soviet ballet, **Gerald Dowler** looks at the events leading up to Rudolf Nureyev's defection to the west in 1961

If the Bolshoi Ballet's visit to Covent Garden in October 1956 had been a landmark event in the history of ballet, what followed after the dancers were safely back in Moscow was nothing short of a cultural upheaval. For the first time, those on both sides of the artistic Iron Curtain could see each other; the effect on western ballet of 1956 and subsequent visits was huge; for Russians, witnessing dancers from other schools and traditions, with other artistic motivations and messages, was revelatory.

The agreed return visit of the Sadler's Wells Ballet to Moscow was cancelled on advice from the

UK government owing to the Soviet invasion of Hungary in November 1956 and the Suez Crisis, prompting a furious reaction from Mikhail Chulaki, director of the Bolshoi Theatre: he blamed Suez on "Anglo-French and Israeli aggressive agitation" and referred to material concerning "the brutalities of the White Terror in Hungary". The gates of cultural exchange, however, had been definitively opened and when the political temperature had dropped, it continued, the first being a visit by the Paris Opéra Ballet to Moscow in 1958 and the return visit the same year by the Bolshoi to the French capital.

What was perhaps underestimated by western ballet companies was the ideological unacceptability of much of what they would present in Russia, from the actual nature of their ballets, often guilty of the artistic "formalism" proscribed in Russia, to the absence of political message and an undesirable sexual content. A later entry in *Bol'shaya Entsiklopediya* (as quoted by Mary Grace Swift) neatly sums up the critique of western ballets which, with the arrival of foreign companies in Russia, were being shown to balletomane Soviet citizens: "They express a hideous picture of the decay of reactionary bourgeois culture. Just as in the other forms of bourgeois art, the present ballet of capitalistic countries serves the reactionary aims of imperialism. In it are preached submissiveness to fate (*Dante Sonata* – London)... death as a 'higher rest' (*Le Jeune Homme et la Mort* – Paris); insanity (*Night Shadow* – USA); murder and violence..."

During the Paris Opéra's visit, criticism of the ballets shown mounted, with Serge Lifar's poetic *Les Mirages* targeted for its portrayal of human solitude "in the midst of deceptions". Its focus on the loneliness of existence ran contrary to accepted Soviet ideology, which rejected anything that could be interpreted as an affirmation that society denies the individual his true identity. Communism is, after all, a belief that it is society that gives humankind its superior existence. Indeed, the wholesale rejection of anything "Freudian" in dance (and in all of art for that matter) was a cornerstone of Soviet policy.

Excessive introspection was one of the main reasons for the moral decay of the west according to accepted thought, and was seen as a way to subjugate the proletariat. As early as 1949, an article in *Sovetskaya Muzika* by the then director of the Bolshoi, S Solodovnikov, appeared which deplored the "formalistic" ➤

decadent tendencies" in Ninette de Valois' *The Rake's Progress* and Robert Helpmann's *Hamlet*, while in 1950 ballet commentator Vera Krassovskaya penned *Corruption of the Art of Ballet in the West*, which states unequivocally that the repertoire of western companies was designed to promulgate a "reactionary and cosmopolitan ideology, the cult of death, of criminality and of depravity" and used corrupt authors as the basis for their ballets – Proust, Freud and Sartre among others. However, the tours both from and to Russia continued despite what could be termed as "cultural misunderstandings".

A notable event was the visit in 1959 by the Bolshoi to New York and the return visit to Moscow in 1960 by American Ballet Theatre (ABT). The reception at the Metropolitan Opera House was every bit as enthusiastic as it had been in London three years before – *Giselle* and *Romeo and Juliet* were the hits, while Yuri Grigorovich's *The Stone Flower* found far less favour. What struck viewers, as it had in London and elsewhere, was the sheer virtuosity of the dancers, whose physical attack contrasted sharply with their more refined, less showy counterparts in the west. The productions, too, were on a monumental scale. Khrushchev knew that ballet was, indeed, a strong propaganda tool in the ideological struggle between Russia and the US: at a dinner, he asked: "Which country has the best ballet? Yours? You do not even have a permanent opera and ballet theatre. Your theatres thrive on what is given them by rich people. In our country it is the state that gives it money. And the best ballet is in the Soviet Union. It is our pride."

There was no mistaking the role of classical dance as a weapon in the Cold War, but it has been argued that 1959 represented a highpoint in the perceived superiority of Russian ballet, with slow, inexorable slippage as the west increasingly showed its worth, both in terms of its dancers but, also, in terms of repertoire. Russian ballet then began to fall behind, dancing an ossifying repertoire and hit by numerous high-profile defections.

ABT's return visit the next year was Russia's first opportunity to see



Previous page: Irina Kolpakova in *The Sleeping Beauty*. Above left: Alla Sizova and Yuri Soloviev in *The Sleeping Beauty*. Above right: Rudolf Nureyev.

the ballet mettle of their ideological foe – they were, as the Soviet leader had so pointedly observed and which was echoed throughout their visit by the Soviet press, a company without a permanent home. Not that Russia got to see some of the jewels of the company's repertoire, which had fallen foul of the Soviet censor; Eugene Loring's *Billy the Kid* (celebrating a murderous outlaw) and Antony Tudor's *Fall River Legend* (which "revealed the morasses of abnormal psychology") were dropped. The Russians got to see a selection of excerpts by Marius Petipa, and, among others, George Balanchine's *Theme and Variations* (poorly received by the audiences because of its abstraction), Jerome Robbins' *Fancy Free*, Agnes de Mille's *Rodeo*, Tudor's *Lilac Garden* (which Natalia Roslavleva, also known as René and a one-time contributor to *Dancing Times*, termed "a so-called psychological ballet" in which "a feeling of tragic doom predominates") and William Dollar's now unknown *Le Combat* which garnered much positive

comment for its anti-war message.

It was not, however, ABT's repertoire that troubled the Soviets the most, but rather the presence of a dancer every bit as good as any Russian – the Danish Erik Bruhn who, as Jennifer Homans astutely observes was, in his aristocratic demeanour, "a glimpse" for the Russians "at their own lost past".

It was Bruhn who was to be the inspiration for the young Rudolf Nureyev, a notoriously temperamental rising star at the Kirov Ballet; he watched the Dane on pirated films again and again, but was denied the opportunity to see him dance with ABT in Leningrad by being shipped off to East Germany on a gruelling bus tour of the satellite country in the company of circus performers – Nureyev believed it was so that he would not "be influenced by western styles". It must be remembered that Nureyev was the latest in a group of extraordinary dancers being produced in Leningrad by the Vaganova Academy – names that have been pushed somewhat into the shadows by Nureyev's subsequent fame and notoriety.

Born in 1940, Yuri Soloviev was blessed with phenomenal elevation and a classical purity honed, as



with Nureyev, by the great teacher Alexander Pushkin – he was much admired by Nureyev who once observed: "You think I'm good? You want to see Soloviev!" Young ballerinas Irina Kolpakova, Alla Osipenko and Ninel Kurgapkina were following hard on the heels of Natalia Dudinskaya and Alla Shelest, and were themselves followed by the young Alla Sizova and Natalia Makarova. It is perhaps part of the reason for Nureyev's defection to the west that, apart from Soloviev, there was no other man whom he admired... and Bruhn was in the west.

Nureyev tasted something of that forbidden world when he was included in a group of dancers to attend the Seventh World Communist Youth Festival held in Vienna in July 1959. During his stay, he tried to expose himself artistically to as much as possible and managed to meet Roland Petit, whose *Cyrano de Bergerac* made such an impression on him; the year before he had gone to Moscow without permission to see Alicia Alonso's Cuban troupe perform Balanchine's *Apollo* and was, in his own words, "agog". The Kirov Ballet had not been allowed to tour abroad

in the same way as the Bolshoi, but in 1961 a visit to Paris was finally permitted and arranged, coinciding with another factor that contributed to Nureyev's defection – the return as company director of Konstantin Sergeyev, a dancer for whom the young Tartar had almost complete contempt.

The French producers of the Kirov had insisted on Nureyev's inclusion on the list of dancers coming to Paris, but he and everyone knew that removal could happen at any moment – ballerinas Shelest, Sizova and Kurgapkina were dropped in the run-up to departure. Nureyev was not trusted by the authorities – he had refused to join the youth organisation Komsomol and had, suspiciously, learned some English – but their nervousness at letting him go was offset by the excitement that his presence would undoubtedly generate. He boarded the plane to Paris.

The details of the story of Nureyev's defection have been told countless times (most recently in the film *The White Crow*, reviewed last month in *Dancing Times*) but it is useful to examine this momentous event from the Soviet perspective. Fears about Nureyev and his behaviour proved to be entirely justified, as he went out of his way to speak to and befriend French dancers and, giving his minders the slip, to discover for himself everything Paris had to offer. There were conflicting currents among the Russians, with minister of culture Ekaterina Furtseva allegedly wishing Nureyev to dance the first night of *The Sleeping Beauty* and company director Sergeyev deciding to give it to another dancer.

Despite the ovations that greeted his appearance as Solor in *La Bayadère*, his intolerable behaviour finally persuaded the Russian authorities to act and the order was sent to Sergeyev in Paris that Nureyev was to return to Russia before the end of the tour. Such was the young dancer's success – he had received the Prix Nijinski from Serge Lifar, no less – that Sergeyev, Georgi Korkin the Kirov's administrative director and the Soviet ambassador tried to make the case for him to remain. It was to no avail. As the Kirov company prepared themselves to board their plane for London at Le Bourget airport on June 3, Nureyev was informed by Korkin

that Khrushchev wished to see him dance and he would, therefore, board another aircraft for Moscow adding also that that his mother was unwell. Flanked by KGB guards, Nureyev was led away to an airport bar to wait a further two hours for his flight. It was there that he got up, walked six steps towards two policemen he had been told by a friend would be there and stated that he wished to stay in France. The most famous Russian ballet dancer of the time had defected.

The reaction in Russia was one of fury and incomprehension in equal measure, with many simply unable to understand how someone like Nureyev could betray his training and his country. Nureyev's name was carefully erased from all sources and it was only in 1987 that he was officially rehabilitated, but his defection marked a real turning point in the history of Soviet ballet – Russian Terpsichore, in the guise of this man, had taken flight to other shores. ■

Gerald Dowler wishes to thank Mikhail Messerer for his help with this series of articles.

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Don Quixote

Frankenstein

Annette Page: Tribute to a Ballerina

The Royal Ballet, Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, London – February 22; March 5, 12, 2019

QUITE WHY ROYAL BALLET
director Kevin O'Hare chose to breathe life once again into Liam Scarlett's sorry creation *Frankenstein* is anybody's guess. It is hard to see it done on artistic merit, for this is an over-long, over-complicated and underwhelming work that does not improve in revival despite the best efforts of a committed cast featuring some of the company's most interesting and characterful dancers.

The material is just too thin for anything to be made of it; as a ballet, *Frankenstein* simply isn't good enough –

it's heartbreaking to think of all those ballets that languish unperformed in the company's repertoire that could have been put on in its place.

Scarlett's sprawling narrative may well be something of a return to Mary Shelley, but that, in itself, does not make a good ballet story. Crucially, he shows a more than uncertain hand in the disposition of scenes, the opening 20 minutes at the Frankensteins' family home seeming far too long while the Creature, once brought to life, merely dashes out without the audience getting a really good look at it, let alone for there to be any sort of interplay between it and Victor himself.

Scarlett choreographs fluently enough, but even the duets seem oddly muted; this is possibly because there are no real "love" duos, those for Elizabeth and Victor are shot through with

hesitation, melancholy, grief and preoccupation – hardly the stuff of heart-stopping pas de deux. As a result, they never get off the ground. The ensemble work is, at times, predictable, as in the Act III ball, faintly risible, as in the dancing laboratory assistants in the operating theatre who clutch specimen jars, or have been seen countless times before, as with the dancing valets and chambermaids at the *Frankenstein* house.

John Macfarlane's designs continue to be a triumph, the progression to the final nightmarish tableau is masterly, and the costumes are extremely fine. Alas, from the pit, Lowell Liebermann's score churns on seemingly ad infinitum, always promising to break into a really strong melody and never doing so. It is a serious-minded composition but it does not quicken the collective pulse or contribute to any telling stage climax. At its best in the theatrically impressive reanimation scene, it otherwise rarely rises above the pedestrian.

The dancers struggled gamely on during the first night on March 5. Federico Bonelli, the company's senior male principal, ever-youthful of look and movement, worked hard to chart Victor Frankenstein's tragedy, but it was difficult even for him to look anguished for the entire ballet – the role really does not give him much more. His partnering of Laura Morera was impeccable and their duets were carefully crafted, with telling detail. Morera continues to reign supreme as The Royal Ballet's senior dance-actress and is something of a muse for Scarlett, so it is a real pity, then, that he has not created the role of a lifetime for her – she deserves it. Her musicality, sense of rubato and proportion, and unfailing good taste are a joy to watch, even in such a poor vehicle as this. She has had a thrilling season thus far, superb in ballet after ballet.

Below: Wei Wang and Federico Bonelli in *Frankenstein*.





It was good fortune indeed to have James Hay as Victor's friend, Henry. He is an artist of impeccable stage manners and a dancer of impressive technique that he deploys with finesse, able to make sense of any choreography. Once he was over the frankly embarrassing tavern scene in which he is "hazed" by his fellow medical students, he was able to settle down to some strong dancing, especially in the Act III ball scene.

It was strange that when William Bracewell, who was due to dance the Creature, was injured, The Royal Ballet called in Wei Wang, a guest artist from San Francisco Ballet, who had admittedly danced the role with his home company. Did this ensemble really not have any other male dancer who could have appeared? Wang danced well enough, but was not worth the expense.

A special mention for Elizabeth McGorian as the Frankensteins' housekeeper, a study in buttoned-up primness, while Bennet Gartside

charted the catalogue of disappointments that Frankenstein senior has to endure with considerable dignity. Thomas Whitehead, unsure perhaps what to do with the role, unwisely went for over-the-top histrionics as the Professor which at least made one laugh. Let us hope this is the last sighting of Scarlett's creature and that it will now be left to die in peace.

GERALD DOWLER

IN ADDITION TO
FRANKENSTEIN, The Royal Ballet continued with its run of Carlos Acosta's *Don Quixote* at Covent Garden, the first performance of which this season I reviewed last month. On February 22, Lauren Cuthbertson and Matthew Ball made their debuts in the roles as Kitri and Basilio, and the couple brought some much-needed life to the production. Sparring off one another, the pair were feisty and headstrong, bringing bags of personality and humour to their dances and enjoying the bravura of the

choreography. Cuthbertson, in particular, displayed a steely brilliance in her pointe work and Ball held her above his head in a death-defying lift with nonchalant ease, and, in a reminder that *Don Quixote* is essentially a demi-caractère ballet, Cuthbertson and Ball took on the Grand pas de deux with a saucy swagger, Cuthbertson concluding the duet with a cascade of thrilling fouettés.

Joining them in helping to make this a more enjoyable evening was the doddery, crazy Don of Gary Avis, and Mayara Magri as Mercedes, whose dancing has a quality of richness that goes right up from her fingertips, through her arms and neck and down through her spine – I look forward to her own debut as Kitri later in the run.

Annette Page, who died from Motor Neurone disease in 2017, was one of the most beloved ballerinas to have appeared with The Royal Ballet during the 1950s and 1960s, and the company presented a touching tribute to her in the Linbury Theatre

Above: Olivia Cowley and Nicol Edmonds in *Ever After*.

on March 12. Titled *Annette Page: Tribute to a Ballerina* it included extracts from ballets in which she was particularly associated, including *The Firebird* with Itziar Mendizabal and Ryoichi Hirano, Marianela Nuñez in *La Fille mal gardée*, and Lauren Cuthbertson and Matthew Ball in *Romeo and Juliet*.

The tribute also offered *Ever After*, a touching new duet made specially for the occasion by Andrew McNicol on Olivia Cowley and Nicol Edmonds, reminiscences from Page's husband, the choreographer and former Royal Ballet principal Ronald Hynd, and, as a bonus, Nuñez and Gary Avis in the duet from Hynd's *Merry Widow*. Of special interest were the archive films showing Page dancing in Ashton's *Birthday Offering* and *Scènes de ballet*, which gave the audience a wonderful sense of her artistry and musicality.

JONATHAN GRAY



Tesseract

Charles Atlas, Rashaun Mitchell and Silas Riener, Barbican Theatre, London – February 28, 2019

DOES ANYONE REMEMBER ERICH VON DÄNIKEN, the crackpot author who proposed that aliens from outer space had constructed the Egyptian pyramids, and gained a cult following in the late 1960s and early 1970s? I mention him because his zeitgeisty strain of psychedelic, sci-fi mysticism sprang vividly to mind in *Tesseract*, a new work by veteran dance film-maker Charles Atlas and Merce Cunningham company alumni Rashaun Mitchell and Silas Riener. The piece even featured an abstract pyramid shape in a Day-Glo desert, and a cosmic projection of a galaxy from which I half expected one moving pinpoint of light to morph into the Starship Enterprise (from the original Shatner/Nimoy era, not that new-fangled 1980s revival) and shoot out from deep space towards me.

Tellingly, I was as much disappointed as relieved that *Tesseract* didn't go the full *Star Trek*. The piece draws its inspiration from a 1941 novella by science fiction writer Robert A Heinlein

– who did, in fact, become pretty zeitgeisty in the 1960s and 1970s – in which a house constructed as a 4D cube suffers a slippage of its invisible fourth dimension, leaving its visitors wandering through space-time discontinuities within it. I don't really understand that either, but it sounds groovy.

Tesseract □ – as the first part of the evening is called – is indeed quite groovy. It consists of a film that we watch through 3D goggles, so that the giant-size dancers seem to recede into the far distance or reach their errant limbs right out into the auditorium. The opening scene is witnessed as if through a moving viewfinder that reveals a monochrome room of chalk-drawn walls and panels, inhabited by six people in geometric costumes, doing Cunningham technique. Cut to a scene with the dancers

Above and below: Scenes from *Tesseract*.

in neon wigs and iridescent outfits, rolling on the floor – except the camera is upside down, so that they look like lurid bats, clinging to the ceiling (a device used to far more psychological effect in Gaspar Noé's 2018 film *Climax*).

There's a cloud upon which two silver-clad women orbit each other to space-age chords, and there's that orange desert strewn with geometric shapes – cone, cube, sphere, ring – and the dancers draped on dunes. It goes on: a kaleidoscope of choreographic patterns, in which it takes a while to notice that time is in fact played backwards; a forest of coloured plastic cords in which Mitchell and Riener, dressed in a kind of strappy plastic plumage, seem to do some kind of

courtship dance. It's all quite trippy – but where does the trip take us?

It takes us, basically, to part two, which is called *Tesseract* ○. Here the dancers are live on stage, but now tracked by a Steadicam operator so that a relay of their images can be projected above and around them. The style is still Cunningham, but the gauzy costumes are now more Trisha Brown. Discombobulatingly, it opens with a playback of Roberta Flack singing her 1972 hit "The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face". Hard to say why, but it certainly contributes to the retro look and feel. As the dancers spin and swoop, their images loom and ebb above them, sometimes looping into top-shots, sometimes splitting into multiple screens, coalescing into liquid outlines, or overlapping in layered afterimages. My mind was triggered with memories of early experiments in music video – trails and flails in Kate Bush's "Wow", the kaleidoscope heads in Queen's "Bohemian Rhapsody" – but often it feels like a series of zooms and superimpositions and angles and splits done simply for their own effect.

Is *Tesseract* – or rather, *Tesseract* □ and *Tesseract* ○ – in the end just that: a series of effects, inflated by technomysticism? Does it matter? Well, it's presented as part of the Barbican Centre's *Life Rewired* season, which is billed as an investigation into and response to the technological changes of our times. Perhaps *Tesseract* was simply shown on the wrong platform, for it looks not out of place, but out of time. For if its premise is all about space, its feeling is dominated by one particular sense of time: the past.

SANJOY ROY



Mixed Bill

Detour, Quartermark, Proverb, Brahms Hungarian
Richard Alston Dance Company, Sadler's Wells, London – March 1, 2019

AS A CELEBRATION, QUARTERMARK is bittersweet. It highlights 25 years of Richard Alston's company, but comes shortly after the announcement that it will close in 2020 (see *Dancing Times*, November 2018). Yet what's on stage is anything but sour: this is a joyful evening, dancers and choreographers living splendidly in the moment.

Martin Lawrence's new *Detour* shows the best of this choreographer's gift for speed and energy, with an extra fullness of imagery. It's danced to two percussive pieces of music: Akira Miyoshi's melodic *Ripple* for solo marimba and Michael Gordon's sharper-edged *Timber*, as remixed by Jóhan Jóhansson.

The seven dancers move with tremendous pace, yet they find time to give these steps lavish texture. They'll sprint and leap into one another's arms, then dart on again just as fast – no need for recovery time. From skittering speed, they go right into liquid dips and plunges, and back again. It ends with Monique Jonas, holding herself serenely horizontal, spinning endlessly in Joshua Harriette's arms.

It's very Alston that the programme note for *Quartermark*, a compilation of dances from the past 25 years, lists both the original dancer and the current performer. He has always responded to his casts, to their individual strengths; recasting a role is a chance to show you something new. The current group is particularly fine.

Jonas is magnificent in a solo from *Fever*. She brings both queenly authority and lovely spontaneity to this dance, performed to a Monteverdi aria.

Harriette dances a solo from *Shimmer*, originally created for Lawrence. At this performance, I noticed again the way Alston draws on Merce Cunningham technique, its three-dimensional richness, while also responding to the music

to celebrate Alston's own. The score is both minimal and sumptuous, with overlapping voices repeating a line by Ludwig Wittgenstein: "How small a thought it takes to fill a whole life." The sound world suggests medieval religious singing. Alston's choreography is alive with tilts and angles, dancers expanding and amplifying each other's lines.

Pianist Jason Ridgway played live on stage at the

prancing footwork. There are other hints of period, in Fotini Dimou's stylised costumes and – or is this coincidence? – the choice of several male dancers to grow moustaches.

Throughout, there's an appealing sense of theatre to the work, particularly in the drama of its exits and entrances. One woman is swept off in a running overhead lift; the next couple slip quietly offstage, flitting away. A



(an unusual arrangement of Ravel by Percy Grainger). *Quartermark*'s compilation structure has echoes of the Cunningham *Event*-style performance, with existing material brought together in new ways. I love the new combinations. A solo becomes a unison duet before the first dancer rushes away, or the stage suddenly floods with dancers, turning the last bars of a duet into a grand finale.

Proverb was created for Steve Reich's 70th birthday, and comes back

Sadler's Wells performances of Alston's new *Brahms Hungarian*. Reflected in the curved, gleaming surface of a grand piano, Zeynep Kepeki's industrial stage lighting could be a flickering candelabra. It's a good image for a work that creates a stylised, refracted version of Hungarian dances, catching the light and shadows of the form.

Just as Brahms plays with folk melodies, Alston brings in touches of csardas or mazurka: arms folded, or one hand crossed over the breast; handclaps;

man catches a woman's eye, then withdraws in apparent confusion when a second man enters. For a moment, the stage feels like a ballroom, private feelings surfacing in a public space. From stormy to airy and back again, *Brahms Hungarian* shows a choreographer who – regardless of funding decisions – is not slowing down.

ZOË ANDERSON

Above: Melissa Braithwaite and Nicholas Shikkis in Richard Alston's *Brahms Hungarian*.

Them / Us

BalletBoyz, Sadler's Wells, London – March 6, 2019

THEM / US MAKES for a striking title in our polarised times. The double bill at Sadler's Wells paired a new work – the first to be choreographed by the dancers of the BalletBoyz themselves – with an earlier, albeit fleshed out, piece for the company by Christopher Wheeldon, which featured in the BalletBoyz' last show, *Fourteen Days*.

Them opens on a shadowy stage, atmospherically lit by Andrew Ellis, to the plucked strings of Charlotte Harding's score. Six men in brightly-coloured shellsuits face the audience. Their movements, at first, are slow and dignified – a raised leg, a courtly *plié* – but, as the action builds and they begin to dance as individuals or in pairs, certain motifs emerge.

In a memorable mirrored sequence, a handshake

between two dancers becomes a friendly – or controlling? – hand on the shoulder, which is then shrugged off with a hint of aggression, before another handshake is shared and the loop begins again. The cycle of camaraderie, intimacy, defensiveness and aggression is fluidly and exactingly executed by the dancers and calls to mind the staged handshakes between world leaders we all know so well. Body language can say everything about who is "on top", who is in control – or who wants to be.

Through the presence of a lightweight cuboid frame on stage, the dancers explore further the idea of insiders and outsiders. Occasionally, a dancer will squat on the top corner of the frame, looking down at his peers below, or a pair might mirror each other – one within the cube, the other outside it. In one disturbing image, a

dancer flings his body over the top of the frame and hangs there inanimate.

Yet there is humour in the work, too: Benjamin Knapper, a charismatic dancer with white-blond hair, is captivating, particularly in his solo within the frame as he jiggles and jitters like a man getting in the mood for a night out (or returning from one) – he manages to make an anticipatory shoulder wiggle, or the jut of his hip, funny.

Us was originally created as a duet in 2017 by Wheeldon, who was asked by Michael Nunn and William Trevitt, artistic directors of the BalletBoyz, to enhance the piece for this double bill with a "choreographic backstory". Like *Them*, the work starts with a group of dancers on stage but it concludes with the original duet. In a similar way, singer-songwriter Keaton

Henson's score, arranged by Ben Foskett, has been expanded for the occasion.

In an immediate contrast to the sportswear in *Them*, however, costume designer Katherine Watt dresses the dancers in sombre, pared-down tail suits. The dancers group and regroup initially, at times holding one of their number aloft above their heads – a reminder, again, of power play in tribes.

At the work's conclusion, Harry Price and Bradley Walker are bare-chested for the final duet, winding around each other with mesmerising fluidity. "That's more like it," breathed a happy member of the audience behind me. In truth, there were lovely moments throughout both works but, after shellsuits and tail suits, it was an intimate – and very human way – to conclude.

NICOLA RAYNER

Below: The BalletBoyz in *Them / Us*.





Victoria

Northern Ballet,
Grand Theatre, Leeds –
March 14, 2019

I HAVE AN ADMISSION to make – I've never been very interested in the life of Queen Victoria. She was, it seems to me, a thoroughly selfish, unsympathetic, and controlling woman, even when young, who had little sympathy or regard for her children and grandchildren (who were far more interesting, especially the ones who rebelled against her), and who was remarkable only for the fact she ruled this country for so long and at a time when the British Empire was at its zenith.

It's a view, sadly, I found hard to shake off when watching *Victoria*, Cathy Marston's new full-length work for Northern Ballet, which received its first performance at the Grand Theatre in Leeds on March 9. Unable to be present at the premiere, I saw instead the second cast at the mid-week matinée on March 14.

Marston is on something of a choreographic roll at the moment, having garnered praise for recent works with San Francisco Ballet (*Snowblind*, which comes to Sadler's Wells next month), the Royal Danish Ballet and Les Grands Ballets Canadiens, as well as winning the Best New Classical Choreography Award for Ballet Black's *The Suit* at the 2018 National Dance Awards. I had been looking forward to her interpretation of Victoria's life, but have to confess here to being slightly disappointed. Marston, however, does at least – along with her dramaturg Uzma Hameed – attempt a novel approach with her subject.

She starts the ballet with the Queen's death (Antoinette Brooks-Daw as Victoria), and then moves the story backwards so that the first act explores Victoria's grief at the death of her husband, Prince Albert (Sean Bates), and her friendship with her servant, John Brown (Gavin McCaig). In the

Above: Dancers of Northern Ballet in Cathy Marston's *Victoria*.

second, we go even further back in time, with Victoria stepping out of the armour of her rigid, black mourning dress to emerge as an adolescent. Here, we watch her accession to the throne, her marriage to Albert, the birth of her nine children and the death of her consort.

Much of the ballet, however, is shown through the eyes of Victoria's youngest daughter, Princess Beatrice (Mariana Rodrigues), her almost constant companion in later life and the woman who edited the Queen's diaries prior to their publication. Beatrice barely takes leave of the stage throughout, looking on and intermingling with characters as she remembers past episodes, particularly from her own childhood (where Beatrice is played by Rachael Gillespie), memories that might not always correspond with what Victoria has written in her diary.

In many ways, *Victoria* is as much about the distortion and censorship of historical truth as it is about recreating history, and a number of scenes show Beatrice tearing out pages of the diary where she does not approve of their contents, moments now lost to history that Marston attempts to depict on stage. Centred around Victoria's personal relations with her family and the immediate members of her court, it's sometimes difficult to work out exactly who is who (there is little attempt to present the characters as they really looked, or dress them in accurate period costume), but the men who matter most to the Queen – Albert and Brown – are shown vividly, often with frank eroticism, especially in Victoria's enjoyment at the loss of her own virginity to Albert on her wedding night (which draws a look of horror on Beatrice's face), and implied sexual relations with the muscular Brown, wearing a kilt and top without sleeves, for which Marston has devised some incredible lifts.

Surrounding the action, dancers – all dressed in a unisex uniform of red skirts and nude tops – appear as courtiers, servants, politicians and archivists. They mill around the court, waltz at a ball, prepare manuscripts, and file books on shelves, conjuring up an almost mechanistic world with its own internal logic, the ensemble continuing with their duties in spite of the tantrums of the tiny tyrant.

Despite misgivings at this initial viewing, I'm eager to sample *Victoria* again, as it has enough choreographic meat to bear repeated viewings. It can be seen on tour until June, or in cinemas across the UK on June 25.

JONATHAN GRAY



Triple Bill

Pendulum, *CLICK!*, *Ingoma*
Ballet Black,
Barbican Theatre, London –
March 15, 2019

WITH BALLET BLACK GOING from strength to strength, it was wonderful to see the company playing to a full house at the Barbican Theatre on March 15 at the start of its 2019 spring tour. With two recent National Dance Awards under its belt (Best New Classical Choreography for Cathy Marston's *The Suit* and Outstanding Male Classical Dancer for José Alves), expectations were high for the new triple bill, and Ballet Black did not disappoint. The dancing was clean, strong and powerful, and there were two world premieres to savour as well.

The evening began with a revival of Martin Lawrence's *Pendulum*, a duet to a score by Steve Reich that is almost combative in style. Sayaka Ichikawa and Mthuthuzeli November start off face to

face to the heartbeat music, their epic dancing building into a kind of "anything you can do, I can do better" stand off, with November covering the stage in powerhouse leaps and Ichikawa turning lots of fouettés. In the end, neither acceded to the other, suggesting this was a battle amongst equals.

If *Pendulum* showed strength, Sophie Laplane's *CLICK!*, to a medley of songs all with the theme of clicking fingers, was snappy and sophisticated. Dressed in fabulous, rainbow-coloured suits by Yann Seabra, the ensemble looked as if they had stepped straight off a 1970s disco dance floor, their bodies swinging and their hips rocking with sassy assurance. Isabela Coracy danced a skittering solo on pointe, her head rolling and her shoulders twisting, whilst Marie Astrid Mence and Ebony Thomas were more innocent in their "getting to know you" duet. In another duet, José Alves and

Cira Robinson were sultry, their bodies cinching into embraces. Laplane, who is choreographer in residence for Scottish Ballet, is an emerging talent, and a dance maker not afraid to make dancing look enjoyable.

As remarkable was Mthuthuzeli November's *Ingoma*, the first ever main stage ballet to be commissioned from someone within the company by Ballet Black's director, Cassa Pancho, and it was exciting to see such a young talent taking on a strong, dramatic subject relating to the black communities in his home country of South Africa. *Ingoma* deals with the struggles of black miners and their families during the 1940s, especially during the African Mineworkers' Strike, which saw 1,200 workers wounded and at least nine people killed by the authorities. The work, to music by Peter Johnson, opens with the miners – both men and women – at

Above: Sayaka Ichikawa and José Alves in *INGOMA*.

work in gumboots and wearing helmets, their stamping movements suggestive of hard physical labour and tired bodies.

Alves dances a duet with Ichikawa, a woman who could be either his wife or his mother. She appears to give him comfort, but one of her hands trembles, and she bourées away from him. Alves seems to snap in distress, running hard on the spot until he is exhausted and gasping for air.

In a later section, the men in suits and the women wearing dresses and headscarves, the dancing takes on elements of a religious ceremony, one offering the participants a form of catharsis, the company dancing out rhythms and raising their arms. Ballet Black has found an exciting new force in dance in November – it's a triumph for the company.

JONATHAN GRAY

The Thread

Russell Maliphant and Vangelis, Sadler's Wells, London – March 17, 2019

THE THREAD **BRINGS** **TOGETHER** a starry team of collaborators. Led by choreographer Russell Maliphant and composer Vangelis, this new work explores and extends traditional Greek dance. It's very accomplished, with striking scenes and images, but Maliphant seems to turn with relief back to his own home ground.

Commissioned by Georgia Illiopoulos, founder of the cultural production company LARVIS, *The Thread* has been lavishly staged. Of the 18 dancers – a large group for Maliphant, who often works on a more intimate scale – 12 are trained in contemporary style, six in traditional Greek dance. Maliphant quickly brought in Michael Hulls, his long-term lighting collaborator, while big name Vangelis actually arrived late in the process.

The new score uses both folk elements and the imposing synthesiser sound that made this composer famous for his film scores (which include *Blade Runner* and *Chariots of Fire*). Mary Katranzou's designs play with elements of folk costume. The women wear dresses, tunics and sometimes jumpsuits in patterns that suggest brightly-coloured embroideries. Several of the men wear tops printed to evoke layers of shirt and coloured waistcoat.

It opens with the whole cast standing in concentric circles. Holding hands, they sway and lean on the spot before breaking into chain dances. The patterns are simple and beautiful, amplified by the dancers' fine carriage: their relaxed, open shoulders are particularly lovely.

I felt mean for thinking of the magic of Mark Morris' chain dances for *L'Allegro, il penseroso ed il moderato*, but it is a revealing comparison.

Morris' "As steals the morn" is ravishing because it builds simple shapes into complex structures, while responding to both the steady rhythm and winding vocal lines of the Handel score. Maliphant's material is handsome, a pleasure to watch, but doesn't have the same cumulative effect. It sits neatly alongside Vangelis' recorded music, rather than digging into it – they're comfortable enough together, but not a revelation.

That recorded sound is trickiest in the most traditional sections of music and dance. Several times, Maliphant lets his dancers let rip, but the staging and sound soften the effect. Mina Letsos Konstantinides dances a solo in red heeled shoes, her feet flashing in intricate patterns. Three men wind across the stage holding hands, Dimitris Delis arching back into low swoops and dips. Yet you can't quite hear the stamped footwork. This

folk-tinged style seems made for the live, shared creation of sound and movement, like the fire and spontaneity of flamenco.

Dimitris Paganos dances a terrific solo in silence, his feet and slapping hands creating his own percussion. Hulls' lighting design bathes him in a powdery, golden glow, but makes it hard to see his face or the details of his feet.

As the work turns back to contemporary, Hulls paints the stage in stripes of light, creating pathways that dancers can curl and undulate along. There are still elements of Greek dance here, with chains of dancers or deep, squatting positions, but they're closer to Maliphant's own silken style. Maliphant's signature fluidity is here in force, creating rippling lines to Vangelis' broad washes of sound.

ZOË ANDERSON

Below: The cast of Russell Maliphant's *The Thread*.



International

Mixed Bill

Symphony No 1, One Flat Thing, Reproduced, Ulenspiegeltänze
Ballet am Rhein, Theater Duisburg – February 9, 2019

THE TWO NEW WORKS presented by Ballet am Rhein in February could both be described as being as much about what is not seen on stage as what is on it. One was company director Martin Schläpfer's *Ulenspiegeltänze*, the other *Symphony No 1* by ballet director Remus Succheana. Wedged between the two was William Forsythe's *One Flat Thing, Reproduced*, which has 14 dancers moving at breakneck speed on and around 14 tables – it felt like an explosion of colour accompanied by Thom Willems soundscape, and although it was made in 2000, looked refreshingly new.

Schläpfer found inspiration for his ballet in Sergei Prokofiev's last composition, the Seventh Symphony, which reminded him of the legendary 14th-century vagrant,

Tyl Eulenspiegel. Little is known about Tyl's life, but his pranks became known all over Europe and are still remembered today. Schläpfer, however, didn't create a work about Tyl, but used instead the idea of pranks as the theme for *Ulenspiegeltänze*. As soon as we think we know where the ballet is taking us, it goes in another direction.

It opens in a nocturnal, moonlit landscape, designed by Keso Decker, watched over by a huge owl. Strings hang down like cobwebs, and birds are seen flying. The dancers move around the stage like grounded birds or horses, only then to take up ballet steps adorned with flexed feet and contractions. The scene changes to a ballroom with a huge chandelier, where couples appear as if in a grand pas de deux from a classical ballet. They are interrupted by others dancing like court jesters.

In another nocturnal scene, this time full of the staring eyes of owls, Feline van Dijken dances a solo. Sometimes she creates

the illusion of being an oversized human being filling the stage, then moves like a ballerina, abruptly stopping as if she were in the rehearsal studio.

For the final scene we appear to be facing the auditorium, which comes closer and closer until only the stripes on the ceiling are visible. The cast perform dances that allude to ballets such as *Romeo and Juliet* or *The Sleeping Beauty*, but then the movements turn into a sequence that flows and stops, until eventually three men fall over and one woman walks around them. One rises up in front of her, they greet and leave and then the owl, who has returned, turns its head to reveal it wears a red clown's nose. *Ulenspiegeltänze* is a weird, funny ballet with a dance vocabulary spanning many styles; it was performed with expression by the entire company.

Sergei Rachmaninov's first symphony was the inspiration for Succheana's *Symphony No 1*, to which the choreographer has created a stimulating work about the horrors of war. Uniformed soldiers dance in angular, drill-like movements, and

interfere with the daily lives of civilians, who perform in a sinuous, softer style. Designed by Darko Petrovic, the costumes are reminiscent of the 1930s and the set is a simple grey wall.

We see two men enlist and take leave of their women, Eleanor Freeman and Aleksandra Liashenko. These wonderful, expressive dancers vent their despair in long, outstretched movements that seem to reach right across the stage.

One of the most disconcerting moments in the ballet depicts the men on leave. A lone officer watches as couples pass by him, but he apprehends one woman and has sex with her whilst her partner watches. She complies with the officer, but her slightly slumped back and a small contraction of her midriff reveal her revulsion. The ballet is akin to watching an old-fashioned war film where the gruelling battle scenes have been cut, and although it does not tell a story, it gives heartrending glimpses into the relationships of people faced with the adversities of war.

The first performance of this programme was presented in Duisburg, although the company performs more regularly in Düsseldorf. Because Ballet am Rhein is shared between these two theatres, it enables Schläpfer to employ 43 dancers, all of whom he democratically lists as soloists. It's a very individual group, technically strong and all with the ability to tell a story. Wen-Pin Chien conducted the Duisburger Philharmonics, who rendered the music to the two new pieces with intensity and emotion.

JEANNETTE ANDERSEN

Left: Ballet am Rhein in Remus Succheana's *Symphony No 1*.



The Great Gatsby

Hong Kong Ballet,
Hong Kong Academy
for the Performing Arts –
February 15-16, 2019

HONG KONG BALLET'S *THE GREAT GATSBY* is a fast and furious Jazz Age extravaganza with stunning visuals, gorgeous music and an abundance of good dancing. Hugely enjoyable, if it's overly simplistic as an adaptation of one of the 20th century's greatest novels, it makes up for it in sheer entertainment value.

As in F Scott Fitzgerald's book, the story is narrated by Nick Carraway, whose neighbour, Jay Gatsby, throws lavish parties that draw the spoilt rich of New York in droves although his background (and the source of his wealth) remain a mystery. It transpires that Gatsby is obsessed by his former love, Daisy, now married to the brutal, arrogant Tom Buchanan. The other characters who complete this tangled web are Tom's mistress, the vulgar, voluptuous Myrtle and her pitiful husband, George. As Gatsby tries to win Daisy back, the threads connecting these five people converge to end in tragedy.

The production is a feast for the eyes, with Oscar winner Tim Yip's dazzling costumes (beaded frocks to die for) and ingenious video designs by William Kwok and Tobias Gremmler. Above all, it's a feast for the ears – an irresistible period score from Billy Novick weaves together 1920s classics (Irving Berlin's "What'll I Do" makes a poignant love theme for Gatsby and Daisy) and original music, performed by his trad jazz ensemble the Blue Syncopations and featuring outstanding singing from Freddy Au-Yeung and E Faye Butler.



Large-scale set pieces showcase the company's strength as an ensemble, from a brilliantly realised kaleidoscope of New York, drawing on silent movies, to Gatsby's legendary parties. Highlights include a deliciously insouciant number for the men dancing with their hands in their pockets set to Tommy Dorsey's "It's Tight Like That" (Luis Cabrera stood out in this and every other number in which he appeared); a rip-roaring drunken brawl and Butler (a Bessie Smith-style force of nature) bringing down the house with the raunchy "I Need A Little Sugar In My Bowl". A tap number of breathtaking virtuosity from Wong Tanki is another nod to the era.

The choreography demonstrates Septime Webre's electric energy, his musicality and his inventiveness, notably in terms of intricate, risky partnering – a scene where Myrtle is lifted, manipulated and manhandled by several different men calls for exceptional skill (and courage) from all concerned.

Dramatically, Webre has telescoped the plot into a series of snapshots: this works well in the first act, less so in the second. Ultimately the ballet fails

to convey the complexity of the characters and their relationships or Fitzgerald's underlying theme, the blinkered selfishness and careless cruelty of the rich. The use of a narrator (well played by Desmond So) helps, but ideally narrative ballet shouldn't need words to tell even such a sophisticated story – think of Antony Tudor's *Lilac Garden* or Frederick Ashton's *A Month in the Country*.

Part of the problem is that the characters dance almost non-stop (no pirouette is left unturned, as it were) when a simple gesture or glance might be more effective dramatically. When Myrtle dies, George performs a virtuoso solo worthy of *Don Quixote*. When Kenneth MacMillan's Juliet finds Romeo dead her silent scream is a searing depiction of grief – and she doesn't follow it up by doing 32 fouettés. (Indeed, transforming Fitzgerald's "anaemic and spiritless" George into a working class hero with a thrilling line in big jumps is an odd choice given that Myrtle's passion for the macho Tom is about sex as well as money.)

Of course when it comes to narrative work, the performances make all the difference. While both casts produced fine dancing,

Above: Dancers of Hong Kong Ballet in *The Great Gatsby*.

dramatic honours went to the matinée ensemble, who had better chemistry and were truer to Fitzgerald's characters. Venus Villa captured Daisy's elusive charm and her detailed, intelligent acting did much to make the story clearer. Vanessa Lai Nok Sze was a sumptuously sultry Myrtle, Li Lin a convincingly obsessed, romantic Gatsby and Leung Chunlong a charmingly naïve Nick. Li Jiabo brought Tom's vitality, swagger and ruthlessness to vivid life in one of the best performances I've seen from him and Shen Jie managed to give George pathos even while executing the most spectacular steps.

In the evening cast, Shen was an impeccably musical Nick and Garry Corpuz displayed impressive partnering skills as Tom, but while Ye Feifei and Chen Zhiyao danced beautifully, they looked miscast as Daisy and Myrtle. The home team were joined by two guest artists – Matthew Golding's touching Gatsby proved again what a fine actor he is and Brooklyn Mack showed off his splendid bravura technique as George.

NATALIA ROGAI

Double Bill

The Firebird,
The Rite of Spring
Norwegian National Ballet,
Opera House, Oslo –
February 21, 2019

NORWEGIAN NATIONAL BALLET (NNB), with its strong classical base, has a broad repertoire and one that encourages new creations that are commendably unorthodox. The risk, however, allows for occasional disappointments. In NNB's latest double bill, there is a welcome revival of Liam Scarlett's 2013 *The Firebird* and a new *The Rite of Spring*, created for the company by Ina Christel Johannessen.

Johannessen is no stranger to ballet and in at least two recent, successful works for NNB – *Schéhérazade* and *Desolating Persephone* – she demonstrated an ability to push her dancers toward new horizons whilst maintaining a recognisable classical foundation. This is sadly not the case with her *Rite*.

Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* is a gift to a choreographer, albeit a challenging one. It has inspired dance makers everywhere, but however many versions one sees (and there are plenty to feast on), the music remains key to its success. It was the absence of any tangible connection to the score that failed to ignite Johannessen's *Rite*. There is a brief note in English in the programme. It's not particularly enlightening, but if a production is to succeed, it should not require lengthy written explanations of what is being presented.

At curtain up, the stage looked like a post-apocalyptic landscape complete with a pile of haphazardly stacked chairs, an abandoned car and

crumbling building. Right at the start, in silence, it felt uncomfortable. Broken by a character adorned with loud, clanking cowbells, shimmying his way across the stage, he is followed by three men with large whips, with which they beat the stage and themselves aggressively (a reference, one assumes, to a ritual ending of the winter and dawning of spring). Silas Henriksen, an exceptional dancer (wasted here), begins running around the stage repeatedly, as the bassoon finally comes in to relieve the cacophony and confusion. If only the music had directed the movement from then on, but the overall impression was a lack of cohesion, structure or clear purpose.

It was difficult to know where to focus. Camilla Spidsøe briefly caught the eye (another feisty dancer who was memorable in *Desolating Persephone*) but her movements raised unanswered questions. The vocabulary was pedestrian – not inventive dance, as I have seen Johannessen deliver previously, but

lots of cumbersome jumps, falling, rambling sequences of shapeless grappling – sometimes looking like improvisation.

There was no sacrificial maiden, but a joining of forces. At the close, the stage was strewn with casualties and there was a great deal of unintelligible shouting. The audience response was muted. If you take a score of such monumental importance and impact, the dance should reflect this. No matter how esoteric or innovative a choreographer's intentions are, it should translate comprehensibly to its audience. This *Rite* did not find a language we could easily understand. It was a cluster of elusive, awkward sentences, without reference to the musical punctuation.

Opening the programme, Scarlett's *Firebird* drew a standing ovation. This must, in part, be due to Melissa Hough's ravishing interpretation of the title role. She was both alluring and exotic, technically assured and compellingly commanding.

Jon Bausor's fantastical designs dress the stage powerfully. The backdrop of a broken mirror with a single feather in the corner suggests we are looking through the cracked glass into an alternative existence, which Prince Ivan has happened upon by accident.

Scarlett tells the story with clarity and, as always, is musically adept, relishing Stravinsky's extraordinarily beautiful composition. The Kostchei, Erik Murzagaliyev, is the antithesis of Mikhail Fokine's gnarled, shrivelled character. He is tall and lithe, dominating proceedings with majestic authority. Scarlett's princesses are the epitome of grace, led by a wide-eyed Leyna Magbutay, who captivated Joel Carreño's gentle Ivan with beguiling innocence. Kaloyan Boyadjiev has meticulously restaged the production and, under the baton of Andrew Litton, the orchestra of the Norwegian National Opera were magnificent throughout.

DEBORAH WEISS

Below: Dancers of Norwegian National Ballet in *The Rite of Spring*.





The Sleeping Beauty

The Washington Ballet,
Eisenhower Theater,
The Kennedy Center,
Washington DC –
February 28; March 1, 2019

IT WAS A HUGE undertaking for a company of just 31 dancers, but Julie Kent and Victor Barbee's production of Marius Petipa's *The Sleeping Beauty* was a gamble that paid off handsomely for The Washington Ballet. Bolstered by dancers from the Studio Company, as well as students and professional trainees from The Washington School of Ballet, this new production of the grandest of all classical ballets is a fine achievement for all concerned and, more important, a work in which the company can grow and continue to improve, helping the dancers strengthen their core classical base whilst at the same time giving them – the women in particular – the means and opportunity to gain ever greater assurance, expression and confidence in their artistry.

It helps that this *Beauty* has a fine choreographic text very similar to the one traditionally performed by The Royal Ballet (the best there is in my opinion), and although Kent and Barbee have made some judicious cuts in order to keep the running time to just under 150 minutes, there

is little sense of scrimping or economy. There are five Fairies in the Prologue rather than the usual six (Candide – or The Fairy of the Crystal Fountain – is the one that is missing), but they are accompanied by a full retinue of Cavaliers, Pages and Lilac Fairy Attendants, whilst Petipa's choreography, geometric patterns and harmonious lines are beautifully preserved.

Likewise, in Act I, Princess Aurora has her eight Friends, and in the Hunt in Act II there are Courtiers and Peasants to dance alongside the Prince and the Countess, and the scene ends properly – as it always should – with the Farandole (The Royal Ballet take note). In addition, it was wonderful to see how the mime scenes, especially the confrontation between Carabosse and the Lilac Fairy in the Prologue, have been retained and given their proper weight and importance.

Things go a little awry with the Awakening Scene, which is unnecessarily truncated and, moreover, fluffs Tchaikovsky's score by having Aurora rise from her slumber with the Prince's kiss before the musical cue of the clash of cymbals. It undermines the magical impact this moment has in the ballet, and I urge Kent and Barbee to rethink this scene before

Above: The Washington Ballet in the Prologue of *The Sleeping Beauty*.

The Sleeping Beauty returns to the company's repertoire. Another surprise, in an otherwise standard staging of the Act III wedding celebrations, is the cutting of the Entrée to the Jewels divertissement, so that this section now consists only of the solos and coda.

The designs by Peter Cazalet (borrowed from a previous production by Ballet West) are highly suggestive of French 17th- and 18th-century architecture and fashion and attractive in their mellow-coloured storybook simplicity. It all looks very pretty, whilst not achieving the grandeur both Léon Bakst and Oliver Messel brought to earlier productions.

The first night on February 28 was led by the Princess Aurora of 22-year-old Philadelphia-born Katherine Barkman, a medal winner at both the Varna and Jackson competitions, who joined the company last year. Tiny, with dark hair and a rock solid technique, she danced with bright confidence, a supple back and a lovely sense of épaulement, although she sometimes showed some strain in her hands (which in *Beauty* must appear relaxed and unmanured). However, she held her balances wonderfully in the Rose Adagio, and brought

grandeur and assurance to the Wedding pas de deux, helped, no doubt, by the fine support she received from Cuban-born Rolando Sarabia as Prince Désiré. He is not a natural balletic aristocrat, but Sarabia's exceptional stage presence made him a highly personable Prince who was also able to add considerable drama to this normally cardboard cut-out character.

The following evening, Maki Onuki was a ravishing Aurora at her best in the Vision scene, where she danced as if an alluring figment of the Prince's imagination. South African-born Andile Ndlovu was an ideal Prince, expressing his weariness of the Court with clarity and dancing his melancholy solo in the forest with fluid, easy turns and a gorgeous sense of line.

With multiple casts (there were two additional Auroras), artistic director Julie Kent gave her dancers plenty of opportunities. The women appeared stronger than the men, but both Masanori Takiguchi and Alexandros Pappajohn were fine, airborne Blue Birds paired with Victoria Arrea and Tamako Miyazaki, both lovely as Princess Florine. Kateryna Derechchnya and, in particular, Adelaide Clauss, brought real warmth and benevolence to the Lilac Fairy, and Gian Carlo Perez was a tremendous, capricious Carabosse. Conductor Charles Barker led The Washington Ballet Orchestra in a brisk yet vital account of Tchaikovsky's glorious music.

The run of seven performances of *The Sleeping Beauty* was sold out at The Kennedy Center; hopefully, local audiences will continue to enjoy and experience this great work of the classical repertoire for many years to come.

JONATHAN GRAY



Revisor

Kidd Pivot, Bluma Appel
Theatre, St Lawrence Centre,
Toronto – March 7, 2019

CRYSTAL PITE AND JONATHAN YOUNG, the Canadian choreographer/theatre-artist collaborators who brought us the Olivier Award-winning *Betroffenheit* – as well as the shorter, less widely seen *The Statement* for Nederlands Dans Theater – are back with a 90-minute work that again deploys their unique hybrid of word, movement and sound.

Betroffenheit, with roots in real-life tragedy, was a gut-wrenching catalogue of post-traumatic stress, fathomless grief, addiction and potential redemption. The new work, *Revisor*, instead takes a familiar narrative and deconstructs it to offer elusive questions about human betrayal, cruelty, greed and wilful gullibility and the existential threat these pose to the body politic.

Revisor is a free-wheeling re-imagining of Nikolai Gogol's *The Government Inspector*. As the playwright would have approved and, contrary to the way his text is usually interpreted, the work peels away the farcical surface to reveal a toxic magma of corruption and abuse of power. In a world where "alternative facts," and cynical "spin" have almost become norms,

Revisor suggests the dire consequences of a deliberate evisceration of spoken language that leaves the body to confront and express truths that words have abandoned.

Young, who wrote and partly voices the pre-recorded play for nine actors, was drawn to the homophonic English derivative of Gogol's original 1836 Russian title, (Ревизор) *Revizor*. Young's title character, the equivalent of Gogol's Khlestakov, is a low-level official responsible for the revision of legal texts and the person mistakenly thought to be the dreaded government inspector. In a clever casting decision this role is given to Tiffany Tregarthen, dressed as a man complete with unconvincing moustache. Making the initially unwitting imposter a woman in disguise is a double deceit that underlines one of *Revisor*'s key themes, the willingness of people to see what their self-serving prejudices and secret desires make them want to see.

The costumes and scenic design, by Nancy Bryant and Jay Gower Taylor respectively, place the action imprecisely in the early 20th century. The text makes reference to Russian names and titles and to an authoritarian "imperial" regime whose best attempts at central control leave much scope for provincial corruption.

Above: Kidd Pivot in *Revisor*.

The first section revisits Gogol's plot in a hyper-stylised, grotesquely cartoonish manner that from the start suggests sinister undercurrents. It would be correct but inaccurate to say the dancers lip-sync. In fact, their entire bodies become animated in a deliberately exaggerated stop-and-go way that defines character, amplifies plot and subversively suggests contrary emotions.

Doug Letheren's Director of the Complex (Gogol's mayor) struggles to maintain control but his striding, lunging movements betray fear of exposure. As Postmaster Wieland, Jermaine Spivey, whose joints can apparently turn to jelly on demand, evokes the malleability and worried fussiness of a mid-level bureaucrat. Ella Rothschild's Minister Desouza, in ecclesiastical black, is malevolent and wary. David Raymond's Doctor Harlow – he's double cast as Osip, the Revisor's assistant – is clownish and befuddled. Seductiveness ripples through Cindy Salgado's red-headed nymphomaniacal Anna, the Director's wife. Rena Narumi's Interrogator Klak is the earnest underling, intent on obeying orders and pleasing her boss.

The most curious character is Misha (Matthew Peacock). Costumed in black his role might seem ancillary, but it's not. He simultaneously operates inside and outside the action, an observer and enabler, his interventions highlighting the ridiculousness of the other characters. In a surreal moment Peacock appears in a mask of caribou antlers. Later, as *Revisor* begins to revise itself, switching into abstract mode with the dancers now in contemporary everyday casuals and the text looped, speeded up and fragmented, a near-naked Peacock reappears on all fours like some fantastical primordial beast with reptilian spines and inverted antlers for front claws.

It is in this section that *Revisor* attempts ambitiously to probe questions about language itself, its provenance and location, spoken as much by body as voice. It's as if the characters of the first part are forced to acknowledge their own worst nightmares. When the action returns to its original setting and to the plot twist with which Gogol ended his play, we too are compelled to recognise the horror beneath the façade.

Although some in the international cast of eight – four of them *Betroffenheit* veterans – have more to do than others, *Revisor* is very much an ensemble piece and, to avoid an overflow of superlatives, it should be emphasised that all are excellent. The ensemble must include the integral contributions of the unseen actors, the musical composition and sound design team of Owen Belton, Alessandro Juliani and Meg Roe (who also voices the narrator) and Tom Visser's magically inventive lighting.

MICHAEL CRABB

Cinderella

Royal Danish Ballet,
Old Stage, Royal Theatre,
Copenhagen –
March 8, 2019

EVERYONE KNOWS THE FAIRYTALE of *Cinderella*. In Denmark, the 1812 German version by the Brothers Grimm is more well known than the French story told by Charles Perrault in 1697, but a younger generation is probably better acquainted with the two movies by Disney, the 1950 cartoon and the 2015 fantasy film directed by Kenneth Branagh.

The Royal Danish Ballet (RDB) has presented *Cinderella* only on rare occasions. In 1813 and 1817, Vincenzo Galeotti and Antoine Bournonville (father of August Bournonville) created dances for the opera, *Cendrillon*, by Nicolas Isouard, and the first all-ballet version was made in 1910 by the RDB's first female choreographer, Emilie Walbom, to music by Otto Malling and costumes by the controversial artist Gerda Wegener. Then, in 2008, Tim Rushton used the Serge Prokofiev score for his own *Cinderella* for the RDB, fusing it with the modern dancers from the Danish Dance Company.

This time the task to create *Cinderella* has been given to another choreographer from the UK, Gregory Dean, a leading dancer and a principal with the RDB since 2013. As a choreographer, Dean is rather inexperienced. He has created two divertissements – the Hungarian and Italian dances – for Nikolai Hübbecke's and Silja Schandorff's production of *Swan Lake*, which were followed by *The Forgotten Children*, a successful ballet for the Royal Danish Ballet School.

It is, however, a big jump to move on from these small works to create a full-length ballet in three acts.

With his British background, Dean uses Perrault's fairytale, one that he sees as a "magic transformation from poverty to wealth", but this *Cinderella* does not entirely do the trick. The magic disappears in an all-too-calculated handling of the Stepmother as an erotic vamp, and the two wicked Stepsisters are depicted as the type of shrill teenage bitches seen in a modern Hollywood movie.

Choreographically, Dean refers to a series of works from ballet history – Marius Petipa's *The Sleeping Beauty*, Kenneth MacMillan's *Manon*, John Cranko's *Onegin* and John Neumeier's *Romeo and Juliet* – and even includes a satirisation of the steps in Bournonville's *Le Conservatoire*. He obviously knows how to draw on his ballet heritage, but what you

miss is his own personal take on choreography.

Set and costume designer Jon Morrell, who last year produced a hit with *The Queen of Spades*, has this time focused on a theme taken from nature. Thus the world of the fairies is placed in a woodland glade seen from below and which, with great effect, looks upwards into the tops of the trees. Video allows the leaves to change colour for each of the season Fairies. Less magical is the almost empty kitchen of the manor house where Cinderella lives, and the palace ballroom is stripped of decoration apart from an enormous staircase and a clock. This leaves lots of floor space in which to dance, but here the corps de ballet has unfortunately been pared down.

On opening night, Ida Praetorius danced the title role with lovely girlish charm; she was a tender-hearted and forgiving girl. As her Prince, Alexander

Bozino was technically strong, but bland in expression. He lit no spark of love or passion between the couple. As the Fairy Godmother, Ji Min Hong was as light as the stardust from her magic wand, and the tall and slender Astrid Elbo was wonderfully sexy and manipulative as the Stepmother. Kizzy Matiakis and Wilma Giglio pulled hair, tripped up and mobbed poor Cinderella as the Stepsisters, and Marcin Kupinski's Dancing Master executed Bournonville steps to perfection.

The real star of the evening, however, was the orchestra, under the hot-tempered baton of Geoffrey Paterson, who gave body to Prokofiev's terrific music. This was not a fairytale from the nursery, but a statement of cruelty, degradation, desperation, hope and redemption. ■

MAJBRIT HJELMSBO

Below: The Royal Danish Ballet in *Cinderella*.



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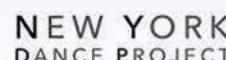
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By Laura Cappelle

Rudolf Nureyev's flock of swans were back on stage at the Paris Opéra Ballet in February and March, in what has now become a regular outing: this 1984 production of *Swan Lake* has been revived in 2015, 2016-17 and now 2019, making it one of the classics most frequently seen in the French capital.

As a result, the company has become more comfortable with this quintessential Russian ballet, which didn't even join the Paris Opéra repertoire in complete form until Vladimir Bourmeister's production in 1960. The corps de ballet is now exceptionally well-drilled in the lakeside scenes – more hieratic than lyrical, but in a way that emphasises the formal beauty of Lev Ivanov's patterns in Act II and Nureyev's in Act IV. The sujets who lead the ensemble do so with new authority, starting with the tall and elegant Fanny Gorse.

The Pas de trois also brought dancers who have extensive experience performing it: Hannah O'Neill and Sae-Eun Park, who have often been paired in the trio under Aurélie Dupont's direction, alongside Paul Marque. All three were polished and elegant, with unimpeachable technique. Watching O'Neill and Park, in particular, it was evident they've reached the limit of what they can do with this type of role. Both made their debuts as Odette/Odile back in 2015, when Benjamin Millepied was director, with O'Neill reprising the role in 2016; this time around, Park eventually substituted for an injured Laura Hecquet.



Still, they've been left lately in "excellent soloist" limbo, with limited opportunities to move to the next level.

The roles of Odette/Odile and Siegfried were mostly reserved for étoiles this season, starting with a curious first cast. Léonore Baulac and Germain Louvet were both promoted to the top rank during the last run of the ballet, and this time around, they were granted the cinema broadcast. Expectations were therefore high, and neither can quite meet them at this point. Louvet is a born Nureyev dancer, who can lend rare grace and technical coherence to the Russian's finicky variations, but he remains a fairly underwhelming actor.

While they are often paired, Baulac is a very different performer. More often than not, she makes smart choices: in the white acts, she found ways to shape

Above: Dorothée Gilbert and Hugo Marchand in *Swan Lake*.

the choreography in order to make her small frame look longer. She understands phrasing and contrast, but the classical repertoire isn't second nature for her, and the 32 fouettés have become her nemesis. She stopped about two-thirds of the way through after falling out of several doubles: going for a strong series of single fouettés would seem to be a more realistic goal.

For a live relay, it's a somewhat problematic performance, especially since a world-class second cast was waiting in the wings. It's hard to believe Dorothée Gilbert was making her debut as Odette/Odile, at the age of 35: she has said it was a role she shied away from for years, believing she wasn't right for it. It's true she isn't in the tall, elongated

Russian mould, but then again, neither were many of the great French swan queens. More important, at this stage in her career, she possesses the eloquence and authority to captivate with the smallest of gestures. The fouettés were no hurdle, and the contrast between her lithe, fearful Odette and the glee that she deploys as Odile was perfectly judged.

Gilbert also benefited from her now long-running partnership with Hugo Marchand, who isn't as wholly fluent in Nureyev's combinations as Louvet, but who colours them throughout with dramatic intent (the comparison between the two, who were classmates at the Paris Opéra Ballet School, was genuinely fascinating). Together, Gilbert and Marchand have the kind of star power that a company should be actively promoting.

The biggest splash in the first cast came from the sharp, effortlessly charismatic François Alu as Siegfried's tutor Rothbart (with a bald head, an effective look in this role). In the lone variation Nureyev crafted for Rothbart, during the Black Swan grand pas, he restored details often glossed over because of the choreography's technical difficulty. Following him is no easy task, but young Thomas Docquier, who only joined the company in 2015, rose to the occasion in impressive fashion. He held his own alongside the tall Marchand, and shaped a dark enough – if slightly generic – character. Add him to the long list of gifted men the School has produced in recent years. ■

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Letter from St Petersburg

By Igor Stupnikov

The premiere of Boris Eifman's *Pygmalion's Effect* took place at the Alexandrinsky Theatre on February 6. The subject is based on that of the Greek sculptor Pygmalion, who made a statue of a maiden; he fell in love with his creation, Galatea, and at his prayer Aphrodite gave it life. The score of the ballet is a patchwork of music by Johann Strauss the younger, as well as extracts from Mozart's 23rd Piano Concerto, but Eifman places the action in a contemporary setting with the idea to show the unbridgeable gap between the rich and the poor.

Pygmalion is now called Lion, a champion ballroom dancer and owner of a studio; Gala, a girl from the slums, has a degenerate drunkard of a father, Holmes. By chance, Lion comes across Gala in the street. At first appalled by her agonised dancing, he is then surprised by the virtuosity of her movements and decides to turn her into a first class ballroom dancer. The lessons are full of humour: Gala is stubborn, tries to run away, and slip out of Lion's arms, but eventually becomes like a marionette in the hands of a puppeteer.

Lubov Andeeva is splendid as Gala – her movements range from acrobatic somersaults to elegant waltzing, and she infuses her dance with dramatic power and rich nuance. Her technical command was perfect, but she also applied herself to the constantly changing music with excellent precision. Oleg Gabyshev's Lion showed various aspects of his character: an arrogant, haughty maître and an

irritated coach, an enamoured man and a selfish owner of a glamorous studio. A mature dancer, Gabyshev brought power and elegance to each movement; the change in his body angles were juicy and his jumps arrestingly precise.

The finale of the ballet is sad, with neither Lion nor Gala able to surmount the abyss separating their worlds. Lion and Gala's farewell duet is sorrowful, but what is, after all, Pygmalion's effect? Eifman found the term in the works of psychologists: "A person who is considered talented by others will feel confident and self-reliant and will score big successes." What was the reason for Eifman's couple to part: did Lion not believe in Gala's talent? Or did Gala not want to believe in her capabilities? It seems the choreographer expects the audience to answer these questions.

On February 21, a gala at the Maryinsky Theatre was dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the birth of the great ballerina Alla Shelest. Galina Ulanova called her "an inspired tragedienne of the ballet stage". Shelest graduated from the Vaganova Academy in 1937 but her life in the theatre was difficult from the beginning. For years she was relegated to performing as an understudy for Natalia Dudinskaya, the wife of Konstantin Sergeyev, director of the company. For example, Shelest was not given the role of Giselle for many years and when she finally did dance it she was a revelation. She was, however, the embodiment of the very

spirit of Petersburg style – beautiful, noble, infallible, and was able to visit the UK in 1953 with her partner Konstantin Shatilov. The gala included extracts from ballets where Shelest had sparkled in leading roles: *Swan Lake*, *Shurale*, *The Legend of Love* and *Spartacus*. Bolshoi stars Vladislav Lantratov and Maria Alexandrova also participated, dancing the *Don Quixote* pas de deux.

Another premiere of *Le Corsaire* at the Mikhailovsky? Oh, God, no! In February, the theatre swapped the two versions of *Corsaire* in its repertoire: Mikhail Messerer's 2015 production gave way to a revival of the ballet staged by Farukh Ruzimatov in 2009. This might be explained by the recent change of artistic directors at the Mikhailovsky Ballet, with the Spanish choreographer Nacho Duato – after a five-year absence – returning to head the company. Messerer, now appointed guest principal ballet master, did not have the chance to stage his

long-awaited production of *Coppélia*, nor manage to keep his *Corsaire* alive.

The major difference between the productions is length and dance saturation: Messerer based his three-act version on that of Konstantin Sergeyev, which had kept many dances from Petipa's original. Ruzimatov definitely prefers to squeeze the best of it into two acts, turning the ballet into a breathtaking blockbuster, where scene follows scene at cinematic speed. The real advantage of his production is the designs by Valery Levental, but nevertheless, be it old or new, the Mikhailovsky dancers seemed to enjoy every opportunity to shine: Viktor Lebedev a brilliant Ali, Anastasia Soboleva a wonderfully coquettish Gulnara, Angelina Vorontsova a tender but stouthearted Medora, and Leonid Sarafanov naughty enough to fool around as Lankedem. ■

Below: Lubov Andeeva and Oleg Gabyshev in *Pygmalion's Effect*.





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In a statement reprinted in a programme note for a presentation at the 92nd Street Y, Merce Cunningham was quoted as saying "My work has always been in process. I do not think of each dance as an object, rather a short stop on the way." Dancegoers had a glimpse of many of these "short stops" when the Y presented *A Feast of Cunningham*, part of a series of events celebrating Cunningham's centenary and featuring former Cunningham dancers as well as guest companies with Cunningham pieces in their repertoire.

Two fine organisations took part. New York Theatre Ballet (NYTB) tilted and twisted through the breezy *Cross Currents* and were excellent in a production of *Septet* that was of special interest because of its programme note. Cunningham became famous for discarding plots and specific themes (although not moods and atmospheres), but in 1953 he still fancied programme

notes, and employed a self-consciously whimsical one for *Septet*, a dance in seven parts for six dancers. The sections bear such titles as "In the Garden," "In the Playground," "In the Morgue," and "In the End" (the finale, of course). Although eventually discarded, NYTB restored them, possibly to place *Septet* in its historical context. They aren't necessary; in fact, they make an attractive dance coy.

Twelve students from Miami's admirable New World School of the Arts gave a robust account of a *Minevent*, which incorporated movements taken from eight works choreographed between 1953 and 2009. The *Event* was devised by Melissa Toogood, a former member of the Cunningham company who now stages his dances for many groups and who supervised some of the revivals on this programme. She also danced solos from *Doubles* and *Loose Time*, and was paired with Calvin Royal III, a soloist with American Ballet Theatre, in duets from

Above: Élodie Fonnard and Reinoud Van Mechelen (centre) in *Daphnis et Églé*.

Scenario, Landrover, and Trails. Every inch of space seemed enlivened in these excerpts, affirming Cunningham's belief that "Dance is most deeply concerned with each single instant as it comes along." This was truly a feast, a feast of Cunningham titbits.

Another delectable presentation was *Rameau, maître à danser*, which the musicians and dancers of William Christie's Les Arts Florissants brought to the BAM Howard Gilman Opera House of the Brooklyn Academy of Music. Although its title might seem to promise a biographical study or one expounding the theoretical ideas of that 18th-century composer who so greatly influenced dance, *Rameau* was a double bill of *Daphnis et Églé* and *La Naissance d'Osiris*, two short operas with dancing – "actes de ballet" Rameau called them – dating from the 1750s.

Both are dramatically slight, yet musically rich, with lilting dance tunes. Their charm was preserved, with a minimum of modern-day exaggeration, in this staging by Sophie Daneman, with choreography by the late Françoise Denieau restaged by Gilles Poirier. Christie was on hand to conduct a musically stylish production.

Participants were on stage together, with singers and dancers in front of the orchestra, and there were no scenic spectacles or grand costumes. Everyone wore peasant attire and could have stepped out of *La Fille mal gardée*, choreographed in 1789. *Églé* told a silly tale (or was it really so silly?) of two affectionate young people who, after vowing themselves to friendship, decided that it was love they really felt. *Osiris* was even slighter dramatically, consisting of celebrations marking the birth of the Egyptian god, all of them taking place in what resembled a country fair, rather than an ancient palace.

I'll let specialists discuss the authenticity of the double bill's choreography. Surely, the performers who represented the Three Graces back in 1754 did not dance barefoot, as these dancers did in what appeared to be a prophecy of Isadora Duncan, but they danced quite charmingly. No one in either work was silly or pretentious. The choreography for both operas was breezy and gentle, with dancers bounding about the stage with vitality and grace, preserving the spirit of some delicious music. ■

9 to 5 Come from Away Waitress

Facts are facts. Despite every protest movement from Women's Lib to #MeToo, old-fashioned sexism still runs rampant through society, and the gender paygap isn't getting any smaller. So a tale about proud women taking power into their own hands, which inspired a hit movie in 1980 and a hit Broadway show in 2009, can easily be a hit today.

The musical *9 to 5* fills the Savoy Theatre with righteous anger, rib-nudging double entendres, toe-tapping music, and the type of crisp, useful dancing that has largely vanished from musical comedy. In a rigidly stratified office where the secretaries are women and the executives are men, efficient Violet, timid Judy and the blonde bombshell Doralee pool their wits to turn the tables on Mr Hart, the bigoted boss. Galvanised by a shared spliff but without resorting to violence or dramatic soul-searching, they kidnap him to the safety of his own home and take charge at work, introducing equal pay, a crèche, and time-sharing before uncovering his dishonest accounting and inheriting his position.

Video projections frame the proscenium and back the action, establishing the big-city bustle and

varied locations, and Dolly Parton has added a clutch of country numbers to her original title song, which the opening-night audience belted out happily during the finale. Leaning more toward comedy than musical, however, Patricia Resnick's book, Jeff Calhoun's direction and Lisa Stevens' choreography generate the shenanigans' breakneck pace and keep it snappy.

The three leads appear amidst a jittery morning routine of dressing and shaving, crammed lifts and flying elbows. Inching into the corporate maze that forces the staff to scurry like rats, Judy almost vanishes in a swirl of automated machinery, stacked paper

files, rubber stamps, and swivelling chairs. That rapid-fire number jumps to doubletime as the dizzying demands and her confusion increase and occasionally drops to slow-motion for emphasis.

Surrounded by the finger-snapping male ensemble, Violet's jazzy fantasy of being "One of the Boys" radiates Fosse-style cool. Playing devoted Ros, the only woman who adores Hart, Bonnie Langford emerges from her breakaway dress in a sexy red corset for a death-defying tango with her ruffled dream lover.

You could dismiss the whole thing as a screwball comedy except the exploited screwballs talk

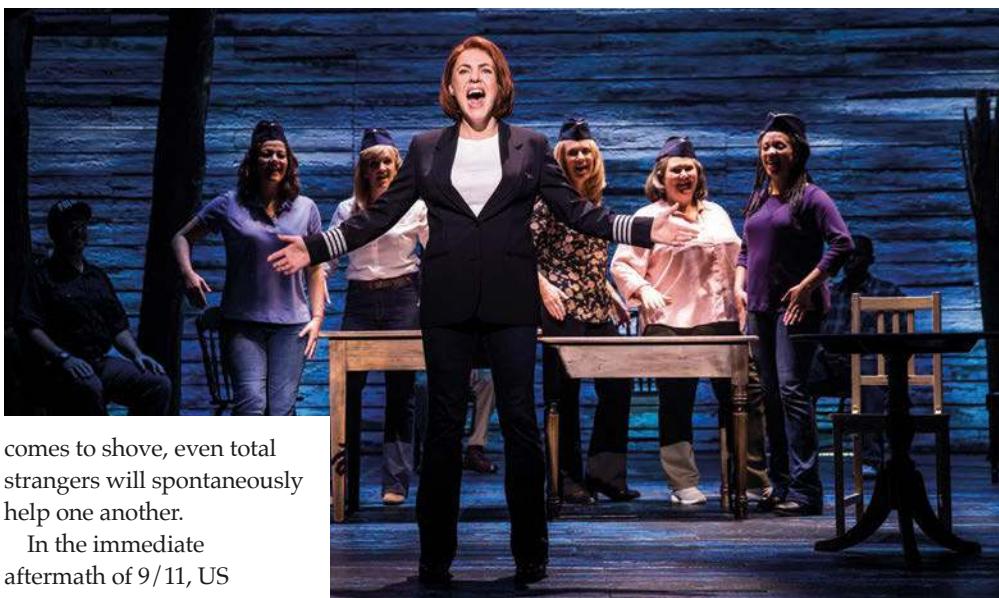
Below: The cast of *9 to 5*. Right: The West End company of *Come From Away*. Far right: The cast of *Waitress*.

perfect sense. Like Parton's songs, the show's straight-shooting sincerity nails both the fun and the pain in women's lives, and we root for the independent trio from the get-go.

When *Come from Away* crept quietly into the Phoenix Theatre, only those who follow theatrical events worldwide could predict it would become the sleeper hit of the London season. Launched in 2013 as a Canadian college production, it arrived on Broadway in 2017 and remains there now while a national tour crisscrosses the States.

Minuscule in comparison to the extravagance of most musicals, it gathers 12 actors and an onstage band of eight in a featureless space, framed by trees and dressed with mismatched wooden chairs and tables. Then, in only 100 minutes, it reminds us that when push





comes to shove, even total strangers will spontaneously help one another.

In the immediate aftermath of 9/11, US airspace closed and planes put down wherever they could. Thirty-eight of them, carrying nearly 7,000 people, landed in Gander, Newfoundland, an isolated town of less than 10,000 inhabitants who instantly embraced the responsibility of housing, feeding, clothing and reassuring their unexpected guests.

Few theatrical interpretations of history focus on the kindness and generosity of those who lived it. Sharing the credit for the show's book, music and lyrics, Irene Sankoff and David Hein fly us to Gander to meet the community, the flight crew and the bewildered passengers, gradually revealing how the locals and outsiders coped, how improvised hospitality evolved into friendship, how trust and hope grew from horrific circumstances.

Apart from two setpieces – the opening number, "Welcome to the Rock," and the giddy jig "In the Bar" – Kelly Devine's musical staging supports Christopher Ashley's direction like a silent partner, never intruding but augmenting each scene. With no more effort than it takes to rearrange the chairs, the cast switches roles before our eyes. Seated in pairs, limbs outflung, they sprawl

in their seats on the plane, where they were trapped for 28 hours. Taut with shock, they absorb the television coverage that finally explained their situation. Nervous but relieved, they rummage through the clean clothes donated for their comfort. Squirming with embarrassment, they "kiss the fish" in their hilarious initiation as honorary Newfoundlanders.

As they flip from saved to savers, gesture and stance also define the mayor, the pilot, the representative of the SPCA, the emergency shelter's director. No one would describe that choreography as dance, yet it makes you laugh and hold your breath, completing thoughts left unspoken.

The couple who met when they were stranded in Gander and married there two years later have seen the show 92 times. I'd go back to it myself, especially when humanity's persistent rage, greed and selfishness make me wonder if compassion and sensible behaviour can survive.

Like *Hadestown* and *Mamma Mia!* before that, the justification for producing *Waitress*, which developed from a small-

budget 2007 movie, lies in its score. Already renowned internationally through her soulful pop recordings, performances and awards, Sara Bareilles released an album of songs from the show six months before its 2016 Broadway opening, laying the foundation for its ongoing appeal; when she returned to the title role in New York for a limited period, box-office takings went through the roof. Its all-female production team – the first on Broadway – made headlines too, and the current appetite for stories about women and for women lends this one a trendy, tasty flavour.

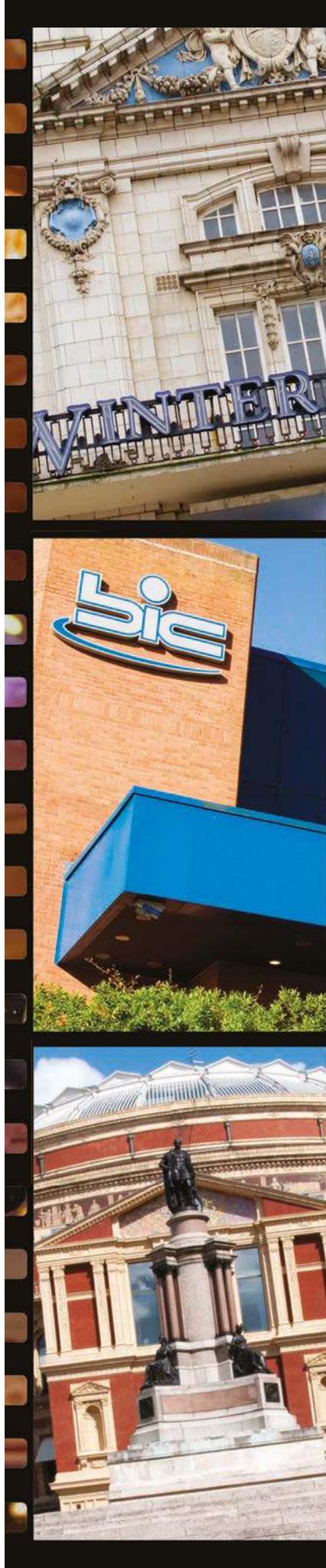
Unfortunately, you've seen it all before, so don't expect substantial nourishment. A waitress in a small town diner, pregnant by her



abusive husband, hopes to win a baking competition and use the prize money to strike out on her own. She discovers true love, briefly, with her doctor and true contentment, eventually, as a mother and the diner's new owner.

The narrative is trite, the outcome predictable, the emotions sentimental, the characters thin as piecrust, the comedy over-egged. There's no dancing to speak of, and the brief passages of illustrative movement consist of swaying torsos that reinforce a song's rhythm or miming every baker's standard sequence of measuring, pouring, and whisking. Seldom has a live production so closely resembled a television sitcom, but the combination of food, loneliness, man-hungry friends, sudden romance and motherhood apparently yields a recipe for success.

A finalist on *American Idol* and a recording artist in her own right, Katharine McPhee brings a voice to Jenna, the title role, that soars above the show's banality and pinned us to our seats in the Adelphi Theatre. Unable to locate a tune to remember or a convincing performance beyond hers, I couldn't find another reason to stick around, but after three hours, most of the wildly enthusiastic audience – possibly enlivened by the free champagne on offer before both acts – would have stayed all night. ■



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DANCE TODAY

The cast of *Ain't Misbehavin'*, choreographed by Oti Mabuse, who is interviewed overleaf



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CREATIVE ENERGY



Strictly Come Dancing's
Oti Mabuse talks to
Marianka Swain about
her theatre choreography
debut, *Ain't Misbehavin'*

To say Oti Mabuse is busy would be a vast understatement. "I'm working three jobs at the moment," she admits, "but loving every second!" The South African ballroom professional, who swiftly became a favourite on *Strictly Come Dancing*, has been venturing into new territory: as a judge and mentor on new BBC talent show *The Greatest Dancer*, and as a choreographer for the stage musical *Ain't Misbehavin'*.

Getting involved with musicals has been a long-held ambition, she explains. "I love creating, and my agent kept saying, 'I really want you to be involved with a West End show – I feel you could do more.' I'd been talking to [producer] Paul Taylor-Mills

about maybe performing in a musical, but I was always nervous about the singing part. Then Paul asked if I'd like to create something instead, and I said absolutely. So now I'm doing my own project outside of the ballroom world, which is very exciting."

Ain't Misbehavin' celebrates jazz legend Fats Waller and the raunchy nightclubs of 1920s Manhattan – an era of liberating experimentation in both music and dance. Was it daunting taking on a whole stage show, as opposed to a comparatively short *Strictly* routine? "Actually, it's amazing on *Strictly* – if you're lucky, you have 13 weeks, around 15 numbers, and each dance has its own character, so I can adapt easily as a choreographer.

"With this musical, what's special is that the story is all told through song, so I did have to be aware with my numbers that someone is singing as well – and they need breath! My thought process was partly incorporating the story and relationships into the movement, but also being aware that

someone is singing and acting for two hours, and for a lot of shows. I couldn't make it too difficult, but at the same time I wanted to make it interesting."

Mabuse notes that doing her tour with Ian Waite gave her experience creating for the stage. "The extra element here is the performers really interact with the audience directly, so I got to think about that." Taylor-Mills gave her "absolute freedom", she reports – "he wanted it to feel completely new. He's been so supportive, and I really want to make him proud."

The era of the 1920s felt like familiar territory, Mabuse explains, "since a lot of Latin dances come from there – dances I spent years competing in. I know about people who were influential with these styles, and how they changed dance. It really became about people expressing themselves through movement." That's a key element to *Ain't Misbehavin'*: "It's all about relationships and how, whatever's happening outside, people

Tyrone Huntley and Oti Mabuse.



came to these clubs to have fun, relax. It feels very relevant to today, and with our production, we want the audience to feel involved, like they're a part of it – and to be taken back in time."

The dancer is excited to bring her ballroom experience to this new medium. "Everything I've learned in my dancing, those elements of Charleston, jive, Lindy, it's new here – it's more from the competition world, rather than musical theatre. It's my style, and then marrying that with the language of the show. I'm still learning – I always want to make it

bigger and better, more intricate."

Has it helped that actor Tyrone Huntley is also making his debut, as director? "Yes, it's really nice. I know he wants to do a good job, and I do too. It's the first time stepping out of our everyday roles, and we're doing our best to make this a success. He's clear, he knows what he wants, and I know what I want – it's amazing that we want the same thing. That's really rare. It's a brilliant partnership."

Mabuse has also explored a new role on *The Greatest Dancer* – to the

delight of the viewing audience. "It's similar but also completely different to *Strictly*," she declares. "I've learned a lot about myself, as a teacher and mentor. I knew how to push myself, but on this programme, I'm working with kids, the future of dance. It's great to give them this platform, and some insight into what they'll face when they grow up."

Formation dancers KLA, eight girls aged from nine to 11, "have great personality, and they're also pure ballroom," enthuses Mabuse. She's equally proud of her other young charge, 14-year-old contemporary ➤



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Former Birmingham Royal Ballet principal Natasha Oughtred.
 Photograph: Tim Cross





dancer Ellie Ferguson, who "has beautiful power when she's dancing, and her flexibility is amazing. She's a shining star." Unlike her *Strictly* partners, "who don't know what they're doing", Mabuse's *Greatest Dancer* acts "need a different kind of nurturing. I'm still choreographing, and working in the studio night and day, trying to motivate them, but they already come in with their talent and work ethic as dancers. The KLA girls practise until nine in the evening, because they want to. They don't think of it as work – they just love dancing."

She is particularly proud to showcase ballroom in an accessible way. "It's not as popular as street or contemporary, but it's special. It's an amazing dance form, involving a lot of discipline and technique, and if you start young you can do incredible things. KLA make it look fun because they have fun, and they're so brilliant that it becomes interesting and cool for people watching."

Mabuse's two worlds came together, with the *Strictly* pros making a guest appearance on *Greatest Dancer*; when we spoke, she was just about

to rehearse the number. It was particularly meaningful coming soon after the announcement that long-time professional Pasha Kovalev was leaving *Strictly*. "It's really nice to share this with him – his last TV appearance with all of us together. He's been a vital part of the show for so many years, and we all love him."

Kovalev and Mabuse have both wowed audiences with their choreography on *Strictly*. How do you keep it creative and fresh with so many routines? "It's hard," proclaims Mabuse, "and you never know who you'll have as a partner. If it's someone good, you want to push them – and if it's someone learning, you push them twice as hard. I get inspiration from other classes, and working with my husband [Marius Lepure], and I do a lot of research into different styles of dance to put into my choreography."

Any favourites among those many *Strictly* numbers? "I loved the American smooth and samba with Danny [Mac], the American smooth again with Jonnie [Peacock], and the waltz and tango with Graeme [Swann].

The cast of *Ain't Misbehavin'*: Carly Mercedes Dyer, Adrian Hansel, Renée Lamb, Wayne Robinson and Landi Oshinowo.

I guess it's a lot of ballroom. Probably because they all had storytelling – that's what I really enjoy."

What about dream future celebrity partners? "Everyone is a dream partner, when you get to know them. It's amazing – you push them, and then it pushes you. I'm constantly thinking about creating something that's not only special for my partner, but that hasn't been done before and that looks different from the other contestants. It's been a lot of learning and bettering of myself. I'm very grateful for that, because I've grown a lot – that's made me ready to take on these new challenges." Would she like to do more stage shows in future? "Yes! More and more. More dancing, more choreographing, more judging, more everything. I'm having the best time." ■

Ain't Misbehavin' runs at Southwark Playhouse from April 19 to June 1. See Calendar for booking details.

BACK TO THE MUSIC



Lee Knights, author of *Find the Rhythm!*, explores the benefits of live music for Latin dancing.

Photographs by Mike Payne

It's Friday evening in central London and it's chucking it down. The wind is whipping sheets of icy rain into our faces and my partner, Mike, and I are sopping wet, cold and miserable. The irresistible draw is Roberto Pla and his 12-piece Latin Ensemble playing at the Pizza Express Jazz Club in Holborn. Colombian-born Pla is the father of live Latin music in the UK, and if you want to hear salsa, rumba,

mambo, cha cha cha and more played at their best, it's worth the pain.

I'm not alone – a brave couple or two are dancing in postage-stamp sized spaces between closely packed tables, overflowing with pizza and wine. Generally speaking, though, dancers are not great live music lovers. Music may be the magnet that draws so many to dancing in the first place, but its hold weakens as dancers become more experienced, led from the source of their original passion.

This is the view of UKA Dance director, fellow and examiner Ansell Chezan: ballroom and international Latin dancers are turning to moves for inspiration and away from the

music. "Dancers don't listen enough to music. All they want is showmanship, tricks, pizzazz and to drill holes in the floor with endless spins, but without music, there is no dancing."

This is an increasing trend in both competitive and social dancing, Chezan believes. "Dancers are dancing through rather than to the music. Musical interpretation is about a lot more than just sticking to the beat. It's about respecting 16-bar musical phrasing, going up when the music goes up, breaking when the music breaks, playing with rhythm, melody or vocals, spinning only when it suits the music."

As dancers increasingly mark up their own progress in terms of moves,



they are losing touch with the character of individual styles, Chezan believes. "Cha cha cha is being practically thrown out as a couple dance, there is so much side-to-side work and so little in hold. It's all show: the cheekiness has gone, it's almost aggressive."

In addition, this shift is stripping samba of its sexiness, earthiness and groundedness, Chezan says. "Samba's character comes from a ball-flat action, the foot pressing into the floor and a downward bounce on flexed knees. Now, dancers want to do faster and faster spins, but the technique isn't there. They're dancing on their toes with an upward bounce, which is wrong for the style."

On stage, Roberto Pla and his orchestra are on fire. Bandleader and timbalero Pla leads his crew – on congas, bongos, horns, bass, piano, and vocals – in a raging storm of multi-layered, percussive beats that reverberate through to the bone. This is the spirit, as a dancer and an instructor, I want to see come to life on the floor.

There is, however, one monumental obstacle standing in dancers' way – Latin music itself. Everything is unfamiliar. From the Spanish lyrics, the complex song structure, the instruments themselves, a myriad of rich and complex, overlapping rhythms and even the rhythmic flow, stressing the end rather than the beginning of the musical bar.

On the other hand, there are musical signposts that can help. The most important is the clave. Spanish for key, the clave is both a rhythm and an instrument. It looks like two cigar-sized sticks, banged together to create a five-beat rhythm, played over two bars of music.

On the downside, the clave rhythm can cause a lot of head scratching. How do you execute six steps, performed to a QQS or SQQ rhythm, to a five-stroke rhythmic pattern? This is just the beginning; typically, only one of those beats falls on the first beat of the bar, either 1-2and-4-6-7 or 2-3-5-6and-8. Another complication, as you see here, is that the strong three-beat side of the clave is syncopated, falling between the beats on 2and and 6and. Following me so far?

Even with all its beautiful torrent of complications, the music itself is not the number one challenge for dancers. The real mission is the matter of dancing out of time. While dancers may rely on the count alone to find and break on the second and sixth beats, this can lead to a disconnection with the character and rhythm of dances such as the rumba, cha cha cha and mambo.

To get closer to embodying the authentic feel of these dances and their music, it can be helpful to move beyond both the count and confusing musical theory. Start off by familiarising yourself with the clave rhythm – simply clapping along to the rhythm of one of your favourite tunes. Next, try playing, clapping or intoning the clave rhythm at the same time as you dance basic steps. You may need to hunt out

Left: Roberto Pla and his Latin Ensemble.
Below: Latin dance expert Ansell Chezan.

suitable tunes, though, as the clave is not invariably played in songs.

Other instruments can provide helpful signposts for dancers. Listen out for the resonant bass rhythm falling typically on 1,2and, 5,6and; the heavy beats of the bongo on counts 4 and 8, and the congas' dominant beats 2, 4/4and, 6, 8/8and.

For fresh inspiration on the floor, step out of the studio and go to hear Latin music. It will nourish your dancing like the flavours of a beautifully cooked, satisfying meal. As you immerse yourself in the chemistry between musicians, the look and sound of the instruments, catch the excitement of the moment when the music explodes, the thrill when a soloist takes flight or the sense of release when a song softens towards its close, dream about embodying, expressing, mirroring this on the floor.

Ansell Chezan concludes: "In couple dancing, there are four of you on the floor. You, your partner, the music and the floor. It's the music that starts this process off; what I see, I should hear; what I hear is what I should see." ■



Party time

James Whitehead looks at ways we can improve that challenging party dance – the samba

There are always great little tweaks we can find to train into our samba, whether that is at a competitive level, or perhaps as a more experienced social dancer. We'll pick just a few of the common areas to develop and explore the actions to give a clarity and ease of movement, which both feel and look better.

First, you should know the foot and knee timing for each action you dance inside out. If you've practised the common ingredients and standard basic variations, you will have the vast majority of training done, which is easily transferred to more open choreography. You might choose (or run away from!) embellishments in body timings, shimmies, body impulses, and so on, but the fundamental timings must be clear.

For example, the botafogos should have a foot timing of slow a slow ($\frac{3}{4}, \frac{1}{4}, 1$), with a knee timing of slow and slow and ($\frac{1}{2}, \frac{1}{2}, \frac{1}{2}, \frac{1}{2}$) for straight-flex-straight-flex. Correct knowledge of the knee timing enables us to understand on which leg we are starting to straighten or starting to flex and accuracy with that can make an enormous difference.

Before each practice, motivate the standard knee timing by dividing your two-beat bar into four half beats, 1-and-2-and. As we call out the numbers, the

knees are straight, and as we call out the "ands", the knees are compressed with the resulting knee action of "straight-flex-straight-flex". We should be able to do this isolated knee action in our sleep, under distraction, whilst patting the head and rubbing the tummy! Also, we should aim to

achieve a similar timing of flex to straightening so the emphasis is on neither one nor the other action, but a continuous smooth cycle from one to the other.

Even if you take the over-taught example of the whisk, for instance, with the $\frac{3}{4}, \frac{1}{4}, 1$ timing again, there is accuracy in the knee timing that so often gets different interpretations. With the first action dancing for longer than the first half beat, it means that the standing leg knee will start to straighten during the same step. By

the time the Latin cross is danced, the straightening is already taking place. We often see couples whose first step remains flexed too long, stopping the continual cycle of smooth flex and straighten.

Similarly, with cruzados walks, as the walk is taken, ensure the knee action is continuous as straight-flex-straight. In contrast to the delayed straightening we often see on the first step of the whisk, the walk is sometimes taken immediately on a bent leg from a straight leg, usually accompanied by a lean forward. The walk should instead start with a push from the compressed knee of the standing leg, on to a straight leg that continues to flex and then the knee of the front leg is compressed as the weight is collected, not before. Ensure that the spine remains vertical as the pelvis rotates and pitches, particularly at the extent of the stride, to avoid the "leaning forwards" look.

Frequent use of the bodyweight between the feet also helps us dance those fast quarter-beat actions, or the "a" count. For example, remember on step two of a volta, the side step after the Latin cross, we have a constructive split weight feel rather than a complete transfer of weight. Similarly, for related actions such as botafogos and whisks. In fact, try if you've been dancing three weight changes in the whisk, it can suddenly seem a revelation to feel between the feet in the Latin cross, rather than a full weight transfer from front foot to back foot and back again. The use of both feet helps time the body

Klemen Prasnikar and Alexandra Averkieva show us how it's done at the UK Open in 2018.



with so much more control; the action feels very bound inside and the body never passes fully over the feet.

Another important aspect of our timing and action is between us as a dancing couple. Very often, particularly in highly rehearsed choreography, we can develop a less useful connection and end up with something cosmetic, aesthetically styled but without feeling each other's rhythm. This is especially important when it comes to those compressions where information is communicated about the timing and direction of the next step during the knee straightening. If you take a normal hold, don't make it a sterile hand connection. Instead, for the leader, as you place your palm on the follower's back, ensure the right arm gives additional connection points to the follower's left arm. Dance some basic actions, maybe whisk or walks to keep it simple, and aim to feel the reactions to the body actions through the arms.

The arms should react to ribcage movement, settling shoulder weight, and body rotations. Harmonise those reactions. Leaders, feel the movement through your follower's back, which is fabulous feedback to see if your actions have been clearly felt and matched. Feel, and enjoy the extra dynamics of what your partner brings to a strong body rhythm.

We've only scratched the surface but make sure you have clarity in even the most advanced of choreographies. Understand your foot and knee timing, as well as rotations and partner rhythm, and you're set for a winning formula in your samba. Happy dancing! ■

+technique clinic

This month our Dance Doctor, **Phil Meacham**, looks at swing and sway in foxtrot

One area that often brings up more questions than it does answers is that of swing and sway in foxtrot – one of the strongest characterisations of that dance – and I have been thinking long and hard about it over many, many years.

If we take a simple foxtrot group, commencing with a feather step, a reverse turn, feather finish and three-step, we have all of the ingredients we need to work on swing and sway. The contra-body movement throughout foxtrot is felt not only at the commencement of turns, but also when dancing figures such as the feather step and the three-step. This, in some respects, changes the dynamics of theoretical "laws" and, as we all know, contra-body movement is primarily the commencement of a turn.

However, if we take, for one second, the leader's steps of the feather step, just before taking the forward step with the right foot it is important to allow the left side of the body to be behind us, so that as the left foot starts to pass the right foot in the transition from step one to step two, the left side of the body should drive forward using a strong contra-body movement initially, and then follow through by creating the left side lead.

Step three of the feather step is then automatically taken in contra-body movement position outside of the follower's right side, and as we move to the next step, which for the leader will be left foot forward, the right side of the body then starts to move forward to create the swing from the opposite side of the body. Using the example of figures that I have previously given, it is the swing from the right side of the body that creates the turn as we dance the first part of the reverse turn.

There are certain points within this group where resisting the urge to allow the body to turn does create a feeling of being "under load" and, to a certain extent, holding back as we dance the feather finish action between steps four and five

– which gives a resultant swing action as the body then completes the turn through the following figure (more often than not a three step). This is a great example of where swing and sway can be easily achieved, and the feeling passed through the body and legs is absolutely fabulous.

As we take step six of the reverse turn, we are very much in contra-body movement position outside of our partner again, with the resultant action on the next step, being the first step of the feather step, of a strong swing action coming through from the right side of the leader.

As with all things dancing, translating physical movement into words often creates a fogger picture, and the same could be said when you are teaching foxtrot and explaining to a novice dancer what you are trying to achieve.

Over the years I have used many different strategies and ideas to try and make this work, and I'm about to share what I feel is the best one I have found so far. I use the example of bowling, and ask the learner to imagine they are about to bowl a ball with their left hand as they dance the start of their feather step. They reach back with the left hand and the left side and swing the left hand forward and upwards as they dance the first three steps of their feather step. This naturally turns the body and generates contra-body movement needed and the subsequent contra-body movement position on the outside step.

I then reverse the action by asking the learner to swing the right side forward to create the reverse turn. Again, using the example of a bowling ball, people very quickly cotton on to what you are trying to achieve. This is where the magic happens now, on the reverse turn, because as I have stated before, you have to overturn the body and therefore control the swing action. This can then be released into another bowling action with the right hand as we dance into the feather step.

Give it a try. Maybe it's just an opportunity to go ten-pin bowling? Possibly, but it might help learners get into the, ahem, swing of things... ■

Email nicola@dancing-times.co.uk if you would like to consult our Dance Doctor, Phil Meacham

Simon's guide to Swing

Simon Selmon and Louise Thwaite on the cover of his book *Let's Lindy*

Simon Selmon recalls writing his book, *Let's Lindy*



Let's Lindy

Simon Selmon

Recently I was going through some old files when I came across the first draft of *Let's Lindy*, an instructional book I wrote back in 1990 about how to Lindy hop. Before you rush out to buy yourself a copy, I have to tell you it's sadly out of print. Whilst the publisher was moving offices, the artwork and a lot of the photos were lost, and so no further editions were reprinted (although a revived ebook edition exists – but that's another story).

Seeing the original manuscript reminded me of how, in 1990, I first went self-employed as a full-time professional dancer. Going from an enthusiastic hobbyist who spent far too many hours dancing to making

my passion a full-time living was quite a jump. In truth, at the time I thought it would be a year off work – but that year is still going!

Getting back to *Let's Lindy*, at the time I never considered myself a writer, and I had no plans to write a book. Actually, I thought instructional manuals for dancing were quite hard to follow and a little pointless, but three months after I became a full-time dancer, I broke a small bone in my leg (whilst out running, not dancing I must point out).

Nine weeks in plaster and nine weeks recovering on crutches made for an interesting situation for someone who had just implemented such a big life change. Straight

away, I called in some colleagues to take on the immediate dance jobs I had and cover my classes.

Now, it's an interesting thing about teaching – many dance teachers will essentially teach the same steps and moves, but I believe students go to you because they like your particular style, your way of explaining, and your personality, which comes across as you teach. I have seen teachers who scold their students and those who barely lift the corner of their mouths to smile, yet they have a huge and loyal following, and I could tell my students were missing me (to say nothing of the fact that as a self-employed dancer and teacher, if I was not working, I was not earning).

So I came back to class, hobbled in on my crutches, sat in the corner, and called out instructions. To my surprise, it seemed to work very well. Prior to that, I always believed I had to demonstrate every move, every nuance. Having to teach without demonstrating made me think about how to describe movements better, how to find the right words, and I noticed how some words "click" and help students grasp a concept.

I believe I owe a great deal as a teacher to that time on

crutches. Not being able to do as much as usual, I also had plenty of extra time on my hands, so I decided to use this newly acquired skill of putting dancing into words and write a book. My concept was to imagine that someone would sit there reading the book, calling out the instructions to two dancers practising. As far as I'm aware, it was actually the first book purely on the Lindy hop and its history – and it proved very popular.

These days, DVDs and the internet – YouTube, in particular – offer a host of instructional videos and courses, yet, in spite of this, people still like to read and there are advantages to books when studying dance: reading makes you focus on the instructions rather than distracting you with movement, or the colour of the teacher's shirt. It gives you the tools to make notes and remember better. You can also read at your own pace, skip or revise pages and make notes on the side. Personally, it has refined my teaching and I believe that well-crafted instructions, out loud, or on paper, are a special key to learning. ■

An ebook version of *Let's Lindy* is available from lindyhopshop.co.uk

"I believe I owe a great deal as a teacher to my time on crutches... so I decided to use this newly acquired skill to put dancing into words and write a book"



Stepping Out

The same-sex ballroom and Latin dance scene

Marianka Swain
reports on the Pink
Jukebox Trophy

On February 16, the Pink Jukebox Trophy (PJT) at London's Rivoli Ballroom attracted the world's finest same-sex dancers – alongside an inspiring crop of newcomers. "That's the wonderful thing: it celebrates everyone together," says organiser Jacky Logan. It's also one of those rare competitions to run on time, thanks to the unrivalled compèring of Ralf Schiller.

Germany's majestic Caroline Privou and Petra Zimmermann still reign supreme in women's A ballroom. Caroline gives heartfelt thanks to the organising team, who produce "such a high-level competition"; the pair are "honoured and grateful" to defend their title for an astonishing 16th consecutive year. "During our journey, we've experienced growth and adversity. We still see room for improvement, but what's been consistent through all these years is our love and joy in dancing together."

Jacky notes that women's ballroom is an incredible spectacle, thanks to Caroline and Petra (quite literally) setting the pace. Women's A Latin was also fiercely contested, with Finland's Piaa Korpi and Santra Rinne narrowly beaten by the current world champions, Kelly Monshouwer and Yulia Zhdanova from Russia and the Netherlands. Both couples had vocal supporters, with Piaa and

Santra's recent *Greatest Dancer* appearance (see March 2019 *Dancing Times*) winning them plenty of new fans. Kelly loved being "back in London and part of this amazing community. Surrounded by old and new friends, their cheers carried us right from the first dance to the stage. We worked hard for this, and winning felt like such an acknowledgement."

Pete Meager of the United Kingdom Same Sex Dance Council (UKSSDC) praised the strong performance by UK dancers, including Michael Litke and Mariusz Stankiewicz, and Jo Baiao and Tom Wohlfahrt – winners of A ballroom and Latin respectively. "A really proud moment for them and their supporters, who kept the room alive during their energetic finals," recalls Pete. He also praises Tim Regan and David Jameson, who returned after a three-year break with impressive results in both A categories. "They were one of the first couples who inspired me to compete, so it was great to see them back on the floor."

Michael was thrilled to notch a second consecutive win, especially after changing both "partner and style of dance! Each category was strong, featuring highly placed couples from the World Championships – that made it very entertaining to watch, and great to compete in. What made it even more special was seeing three of the couples I coach achieving their dance goals."

This was only the second competition together for Tom and Jo, and though "we're still getting used to the system", notes Tom,

"having cheers and smiles made it easier to overcome those challenges. We're both professional dancers, so we'd like to push the level higher and higher. This means a lot to us, and we'd love it to become more visible in the media."

He notes it was great to have such experienced judges – including Paul Killick, who called the PJT "a reflection of [its organisers'] dedication and passion, so warm and friendly and yet run so professionally". Also on hand was fellow former *Strictly Come Dancing* pro Robin Windsor, who gave out the evening trophies. Francesca Canty, chief executive of the Bishopsgate Institute – where the PJT archives are stored – handed out the morning prizes, and Bishopsgate provided a wonderful historic display. Jacky stresses that key to the PJT's incredible longevity is the continued support and generosity of Rivoli owners Bill and Jeannie Mannix.

Men's A ballroom winners Michael Litke and Mariusz Stankiewicz.

There are always new developments, too, keeping the event fresh. This year's included long-time dance photographer Karla Pixeljäger venturing onto the floor herself. "In 2013, I stumbled on a tournament for the very first time, and I was so enthusiastic that I wanted to record it," she recalls. "I also started dancing, and I could take better pictures because I knew the dances and understood when the climax or emotional moments would happen." Her level of understanding has deepened further after experiencing the euphoria first-hand. Competing is her passion for now, but she'll still bring her camera "from time to time".

The PJT has inspired Pete, who's organising the first UK Equality Open in November. "It'll be another great opportunity for British and international competitors, plus we're taking the event to different locations in the UK each time and encouraging starter couples there." Tom adds: "I'm so excited to have another UK competition this year. It means more opportunities for new people to join, and for the community to come together." ■



Somewhere in time

Ballroom's golden age



Jack Reavey remembers the inaugural team match at Blackpool Dance Festival in 1968

Blackpool Dance Festival needs no introduction. It is known and respected all over the world. Competitors flock to the Empress Ballroom in the Winter Gardens and soak up the magnificent surroundings.

The competitors know they are surrounded by those whose lives have been immersed in dance and whose appreciation of their efforts enhances their performance. As a spectator, you can feel that you, too, are an integral part of the festival by your presence in this wondrous environment.

I find myself thinking back to 1968, which proved to be a momentous year indeed. Madame Ida Ilett was, at that time, the dance festival

organiser. She had been a school teacher and was very aware of how to ensure that utter attention was paid by festival attendees. She had cultivated a no-nonsense approach when it came to every aspect of organisation. Her word was law and those who acted with impropriety were very swiftly dealt with and learned to conform to the festival's requirements.

Madame Ilett wished to escalate the festival's interest and with the main festival being held, at that time, two weeks prior to the Whitsun weekend, she felt that it would be a great idea to organise a professional team match. She decided that it would include all ten dances and that the match would be held between

Great Britain and Germany.

Her hunch that it was a good idea was soon proved right. With the match scheduled for the first Saturday evening of the festival, boy, oh boy, was it a sensational success. Telephone lines to the Winter Gardens on the days after the match were jammed with congratulatory messages. Because the team match had elicited such a response, it simply had to become an annual feature. Moreover, popular demand also dictated that it should escalate from two teams to multiple ones, as we see today. It has continued to the present as an outstanding feature of the festival.

One judge officiated at the very first team match – Albert Van Lingen from the Netherlands. He was particularly well known to those who attended the fabulous Butlin's Dance Festival in Ayr, Scotland, for many years, where he was a regular and very welcome adjudicator. As he walked to the floor in front of a packed audience, the crowd held its breath. The sheer anticipatory relish made everyone mind-bogglingly attentive.

The teams were, for Great Britain: Bill and Bobbie Irvine, Anthony Hurley and Fay Saxton, Michael and Monica Needham and John and Betty Westley. The team captain was Major Eric Hancox, resplendent in tails for the Modern section, and instantly changing for the Latin counterpart. Wow.

Gerd Hadrich captained the German team, which comprised: Rudi and Mechtilde Trautz,

Rudi and Mechtilde Trautz danced in the first team match at Blackpool and featured on the cover of *Ballroom Dancing Times* in July 1968

Wolfgang Opitz and his wife, Evelyn, Herbert and Hilde Schöbel and Bernd and Barbara Giebel.

Bill and Bobbie had announced this was to be their very last competitive appearance and the audience went wild when they took to the floor for their last waltz in the Empress Ballroom. Their individual assets thrilled everyone and tears gleamed on spectators' faces at the sight. The Westleys showed just how great they were over ten dances. Their personalities on the floor were simply magnificent and they portrayed the sheer joy of dance. The Needhams' performance featured simply superb fluidity, while Anthony and Fay went to town, particularly in tango and quickstep, and the dexterity of their foot action was awesome.

On the German team, Rudi and Mechtilde Trautz were terrific over all ten dances and collected many new fans with their performance as did the rest of that brilliant team. What a night it was. Those who were fortunate enough to see it find that it is etched into their memory as if by lasers. The British team won by 175 to 167.5 points; the German team won the Viennese waltz and the samba, and there was a tie in the cha cha cha, so it was certainly not a walkover.

There is no doubt that this forerunner of today's team match was a terrific idea and, in all the years since, the atmosphere has never changed, with standing room only being the norm. My own recollection is as clear as it was in 1968. It was simply mind-bogglingly magnificent. ■

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Dancer of the month

Interviewed by Margaret Willis

Francesca Velicu



BORN:
May 1998

COMPANY:
English National Ballet

STUDIED/TRAINED:
Floria Capsali
Choreography High
School, Bucharest

**MAJOR
PERFORMANCES:**
The Chosen One
in *Le Sacre du printemps*, Kitri in
Don Quixote, *Theme and Variations*

“**T**hat’s not the first time someone has said that to me,” beamed Francesca Velicu when we met in a Covent Garden café close to Pineapple Studios where English National Ballet (ENB) was rehearsing Akram Khan’s *Giselle*. She was responding to my initial comment that I was struck by how much she reminded me of the – now superstar – ballerina, Alina Cojocaru, whom I had met in Moscow when she was just 16. They share the same petite bone structure and possess open, bright-eyed faces with just a hint of shyness. Both come from Romania and have the same profound passion for dancing that has won, and is winning, them many prizes.

For Francesca, the most spectacular of these – so far – was the Laurence Olivier

Award for Outstanding Achievement in Dance in 2018. She was nominated for her role as The Chosen One in Pina Bausch’s *Le Sacre du printemps*. At 19 years of age, she was the youngest nominee at the awards ceremony that year and was up against flamenco dancer Rocío Molina and the wonderful ex-principal of The Royal Ballet, Zenaida Yanowsky. Francesca was only in her second year with ENB when she was selected for the role, and still in the corps de ballet.

When the nominations for the Olivier Award were announced in London, ENB was on tour in New Zealand with Khan’s incredible version of *Giselle* – and Francesca was fast asleep in bed. She awoke to find loads and loads of congratulatory messages on her phone

Francesca Velicu in Pina Bausch’s *Le Sacre du printemps*.

and couldn’t believe what she was reading. “I was speechless,” she laughed.

Francesca was born in Bucharest on May 16, 1998, and has an older brother who is finishing his university studies at the moment. It was a visit to the theatre to see *The Nutcracker* that set the little girl dreaming of dancing, and so her mother enrolled her in a small dance school near their home. Her first classes, however, were not the happiest of experiences. She was three years old and apparently cried and cried so much that her dad had to stand at the barre with her. “Fortunately I soon began to love it,” she stated with a grin. “We only did ballet there, but it was a good ➤



standard. I went just once a week. My teacher never pushed us in class, so it wasn't until I did my first show that I realised what being a dancer involves."

It wasn't just ballet that interested the young Francesca. At the age of six, she began piano and guitar lessons ("Oh, but I'm not very good at that," she commented), and studied music theory. She also loved to paint, so took art classes as well. "My music classes were after my normal school day, and I spent eight years at the music school. I took piano exams and reached Grade 8, and learned good musicality which has helped me so much in my dancing. I love playing the piano. Whenever I get the chance, I sit and play something – only classical music – that I learned."

At ten, when she was in fifth grade, she was accepted into the Floria Capsali Choreography High School in Bucharest. "It is a professional high school and, together with my academics, I would be studying from 8am to 7 or 8pm at night, as I also continued my music. My music teacher wanted me to only pursue music and tried to dissuade me from taking ballet, but for a while," she chuckled, "I continued to do both."

Francesca was 13 when she went to Paris to enter the Youth America Grand Prix. It was an exciting time for her seeing all the other contestants, and she was happy when she became a winner in the Junior Department. That summer, she went to New York to attend the Bolshoi Summer School which is held there, and was invited to go to Moscow to study at the Moscow State Academy of Choreography – the Bolshoi Ballet School.



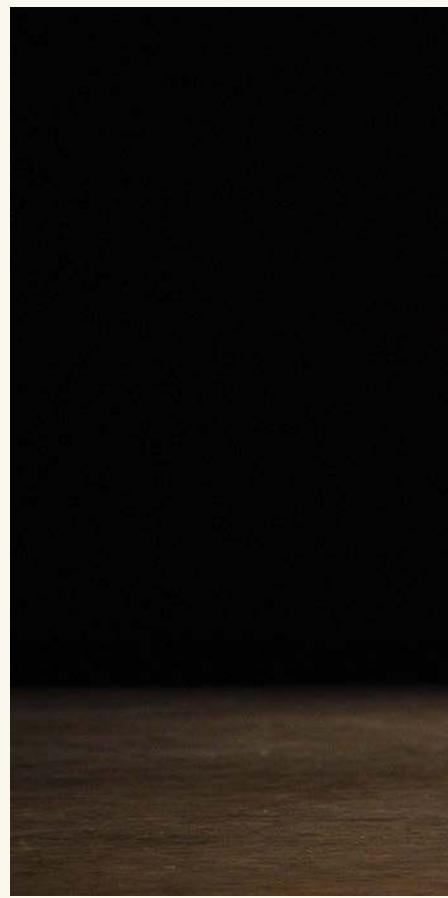
"There is a special class for international students," she continued, "but I was fortunate to be put up into a class with only Russians – though I spoke no Russian." More grins. My teacher was Tatiana Galtseva, who was wonderful. She put me into a higher class and I spent two years with her, but then I had to return to Bucharest as I had to complete my academic studies."

When she was 16, Francesca asked the then director of the Bucharest National Opera and Ballet company, Johan Kobborg, if she could join the company. She was accepted. "One of Johan's best qualities was that he trusted us to do our best and, after days of rehearsing, I was so surprised when he picked me out for some major roles." She made

her debut in the company dancing the role of Kitri in *Don Quixote* at the age of 17, and later as Trio Girl in Alexei Ratmansky's *Concerto DSCH*. Then Patricia Neary from the Balanchine Trust came over and taught her the main role in *Theme and Variations*. "That was a very special time," said Francesca enthusiastically. "We got on well together and I loved her insight into the ballet."

Then came the crash – the news that Kobborg had resigned from the company, and that the company's star ballerina and his partner, Alina Cojocaru, had also left, as did many of their supporters in the company. Francesca needed to find another company to join. It was now 2016.

"English National Ballet has a very good reputation



Left: Francesca Velicu.
Below: Francesca in *Toccata*.
Right: Francesca with Daniel McCormick in the pas de deux from *Le Corsaire*.

in Romania. It was well known to me having watched film clips as a school student and also from hearing Alina talk about it, but I never thought I would ever get the opportunity to join it. Then I heard auditions were to be held in Paris – in the Palais Garnier no less – and I applied. I was delighted when Tamara [Rojo, director of ENB] offered me a job, but," and she rolled her large dark eyes, "then she told me I had to be in London within a week! That was so hard.

"There was so much to do. Suddenly I wasn't happy any more, as I felt that I had just come home to my family after being in Moscow for two years, and now I was going off again and didn't know when I would be



back. It felt so hard to be separated from them."

However, once she got to London, there was little time to reminisce as the ballet the company was rehearsing was Khan's *Giselle*. "I had never done any contemporary ballet before and this was incredible to learn, but I loved it straight away and have been in every single show. I've never had any trouble with the challenging rhythms – thanks to the musicality I learned in my early music school training."

Another memorable moment in Francesca's short life occurred when she was in high school in Bucharest and had gone with her seventh grade class to see the movie *Pina*, a documentary about Pina Bausch. "I was amazed by her work, her way of dancing and her approach to dance. So I never dreamed when *Sacre* was announced by ENB company I would be given the opportunity to dance the leading role. Yes, it's emotionally and physically exhausting, as well as the other element of dancing barefoot on soil, but it was a wonderful experience. ENB was only the second ballet company in the world to perform Bausch's *Sacre*," she added proudly. "When I dance, it's not me showing what I can do but rather what I can give my audiences."

Francesca was nominated for two awards at the 2017

Critics' Circle National Dance Awards in London – as Emerging Artist and Outstanding Contemporary Female Performance. Then she was one of six contestants for ENB's Emerging Dancer in 2018, and her talent is also being spotted outside dance circles. In February this year, *Forbes*, the renowned business magazine, named 30 honorees under 30 years of age in ten different categories who are making their mark on society. One of them was Francesca, along with other famous stars such as actor Daniel Radcliffe and actress Jodie Comer.

Now with the future focusing on ENB's move to its new home on London City Island, Canning Town, Francesca says she has already made plans to move over to that area of the city. However, her new home will, no doubt, need extra space for all the goodies she brings back on her trips home to Romania. "I like our natural country food, especially all the cheeses, and so my suitcase is always full of food when I return to London." Her new home will also have a space that allows her to sit and paint, her other love. "I like working in oils and painting landscapes, but I don't need to look out of the windows for inspiration – I have photos of the mountains back home and I love to be reminded of them." ■





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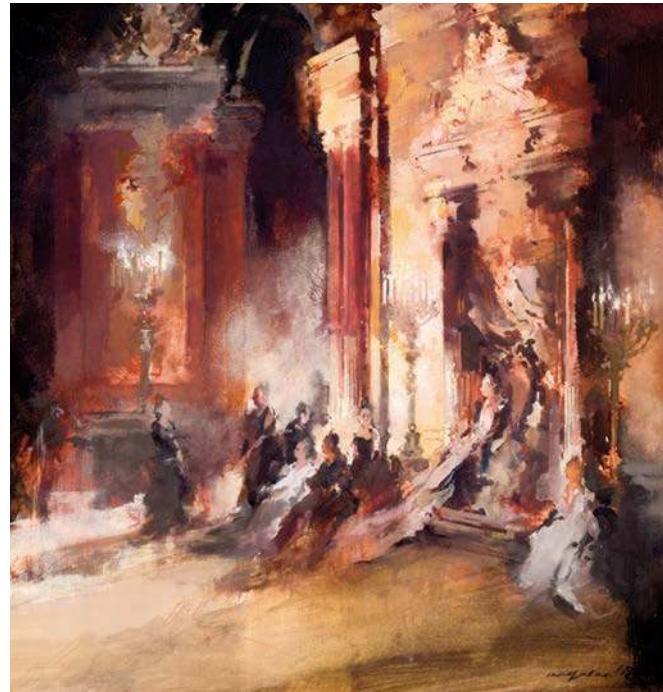
Swan Lake and other works

JOHN MACFARLANE'S SET

and costume designs for The Royal Ballet's 2018 production of *Swan Lake* will be on display this month at the Martin Tinney Gallery in Cardiff. Although born and trained in Glasgow, Macfarlane has lived in Wales since 1975, pursuing parallel careers in painting and theatre design.

The past decade has seen him working with the Metropolitan Opera in New York, Birmingham Royal Ballet and Glyndebourne, as well as The Royal Ballet. His works are also included in a number of public collections, including the National Museum of Wales, the Theatre and Performance Collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Paris Opéra Archive.

The exhibition, which runs until April 11, consists of costume and set drawings,



as well as a number of oil paintings based on *Swan Lake* and other productions on which Macfarlane has recently worked. All items are for sale. The gallery is located at 18 St Andrew's

Crescent, Cardiff, CF10 3DD. Telephone 029 2064 1411 for further information. Pictured above is the set for Act III; below right, costume design for Odette; below left, headdress for the Csardas. ■



★ DEMIS VOLPI, the German-Argentinian choreographer and director, is to become ballet director and principal choreographer of Ballett am Rhein from the beginning of the 2020–2021 season.

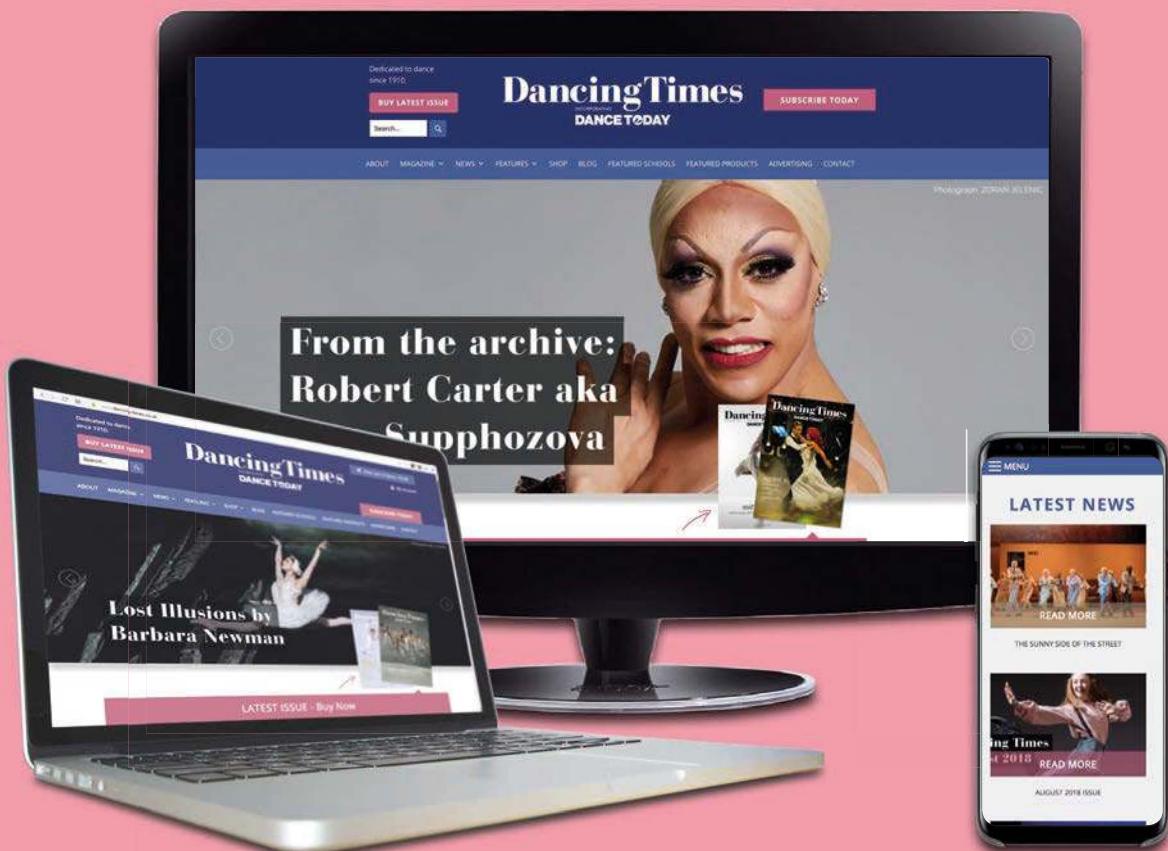
★ The names of the dancers nominated for ENGLISH NATIONAL BALLET's Emerging Dancer competition, to be held at Sadler's Wells on May 7, have been announced.

They are ALICE BELLINI, EMILIA CADORIN, JULIA CONWAY, RENTARO NAKAAKI, SHALE WAGMAN and RHYS ANTONI YEOMANS.

★ Choreographer JIŘÍ KYLIÁN was officially inaugurated into the Académie des beaux-arts in Paris on March 13. ★ LOUISE REDKNAPP has re-joined the cast of *9 to 5 The Musical* at the Savoy Theatre, London, until 29 June 2019.

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Obituaries

Gillian Freeman

Gillian Freeman, the screenwriter and novelist who worked with Kenneth MacMillan on the scenario for his ballets *Mayerling* and *Isadora*, has died at the age of 89 following complications from dementia.

Born in London in 1929, Freeman graduated from the University of Reading in 1951 and worked as a copywriter, and then a schoolteacher, before publishing her first novel,

The Liberty Man, in 1955. Further novels included *The Leather Boys* in 1961, which dealt explicitly with a homosexual relationship at a time when sex between gay men was a criminal offence (it was made into a feature film in 1964); *The Alabaster Egg* in 1970 and *Nazi Lady: The Diaries of Elisabeth von Stahlenberg, 1933-1948* in 1978.

Freeman married the dance writer and critic Edward Thorpe in 1955,

and the couple had two daughters, the actresses Harriet Thorpe and Matilda Thorpe. Edward Thorpe was a close friend of Kenneth MacMillan, and the choreographer asked Freeman to work with him on the complicated scenario of his three-act ballet *Mayerling*, first performed at Covent Garden in 1978. Following the success of *Mayerling*, the pair collaborated again on *Isadora* in 1981. She also wrote the

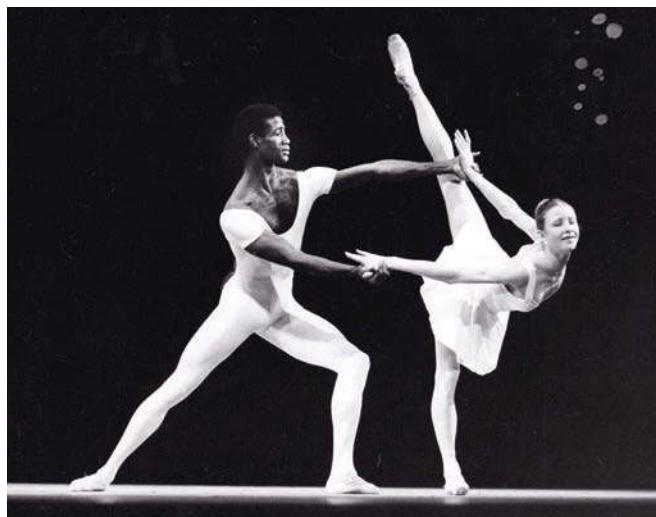
libretto for Lynn Seymour's ballet *Intimate Letters* in 1978, and was the author, along with Thorpe, of *Ballet Genius: Twenty Great Dancers of the Twentieth Century*.

Freeman is survived by her husband and daughters, and also by five grandchildren, including the dancer Jack Thorpe Baker.

JONATHAN GRAY

Gillian Freeman, born December 5, 1929; died February 23, 2019.

Mel Tomlinson



Above: Mel Tomlinson with Darci Kistler in Jerome Robbins' *The Gershwin Concerto* in 1982.

Mel Tomlinson, the African-American dancer who performed with Dance Theatre of Harlem, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and New York City Ballet, has died from the causes of pancreatic cancer at the age of 65.

Born in 1954 in Raleigh, North Carolina, Tomlinson excelled in gymnastics at school, and trained in

dance locally with Betty Kovach until he joined the North Carolina School of the Arts. Long-limbed and elegant, he was spotted by the choreographer Agnes de Mille, who offered him a contract with her Heritage Dance Theater in 1974, and later said he was "the

most exciting black dancer in America". Tomlinson moved to New York to perform with Dance Theatre of Harlem that same year, appearing in ballets such as *Manifestations*, *Swan Lake* and *Scheherazade*, as well as works by George Balanchine.

Tomlinson took leave of absence from Harlem to dance with the Ailey company between 1976 and 1978 (dancing *Pas de Duke* with Judith Jamison), and then, after returning to Harlem, joined New York City Ballet in 1981, making his debut in *Agon* with Heather Watts. He performed with the company until 1987, reaching the rank of soloist, and then appeared

with North Carolina Dance Theatre and Boston Ballet.

Openly gay, Tomlinson was diagnosed with HIV in the early 1990s, but following many years of ill health, where he came close to death on three occasions, he was able eventually to leave the hospice where he had been staying. He received a PhD from Carolina University of Theology, and was ordained as a Baptist minister, but was also the dance teacher and director of The Hallelujah Dance Corps at the St Paul Baptist Church in Charlotte, North Carolina. ■

JONATHAN GRAY

Mel Tomlinson, born January 3, 1954; died February 5, 2019.

Other losses

We record with regret the death on February 20, 2019, of **Ron Freeman**, the former wigmaster of the Royal Opera House, where he had worked for over 40 years.

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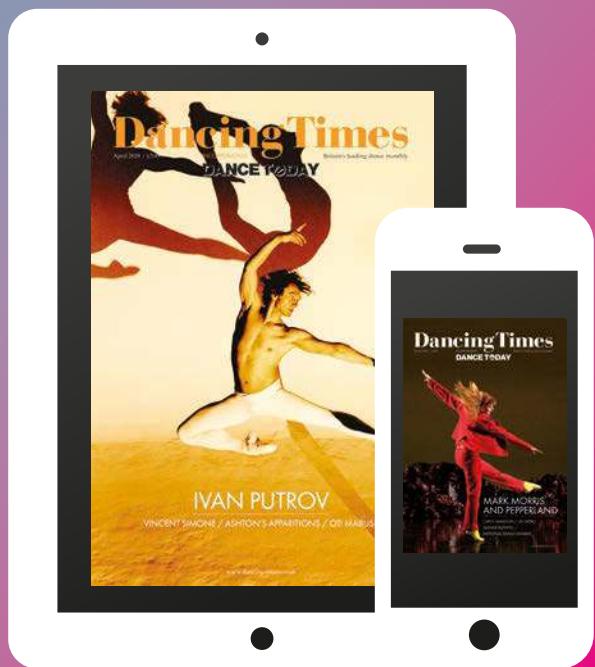
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Yuli: The Carlos Acosta Story

A FILM INSPIRED BY the life of Carlos Acosta will be released in the UK and Ireland on April 12, with an exclusive screening at the Linbury Theatre of the Royal Opera House on April 3.

Yuli: The Carlos Acosta Story is directed by Icíar Bollaín (*Take My Eyes, Even the Rain*), written by Paul Laverty (*I, Daniel Blake*) and produced by Andrea Calderwood and Juan Gordon. The special screening at the Linbury will include an interview and Q&A with Acosta, Bollaín and Laverty after the film.

Based on Acosta's autobiography *No Way Home: A Cuban Dancer's Story*, the film follows his formative years in Cuba as a dancer, his move to London and his relationship with his father, his family and his country. The cast includes Acosta playing himself and introduces Edilson Manuel Olbera playing Carlos as

a boy, Keyvin Martinez, who plays Carlos as a young man, and Santiago Alfonso as his father.

Yuli was the nickname given to Acosta by his father, Pedro. From a young age, Yuli fled any kind of discipline and education; the streets of a rundown neighbourhood in Havana were where he had most of his schooling. However, aware of his son's natural talent, Pedro forced him to attend Cuba's National Ballet School. Against his will and despite his initial lack of discipline, Yuli ended up being captivated by the world of dance and went on to become principal dancer with The Royal Ballet in London, where he forged an acclaimed 17-year career until he retired in 2015 from classical ballet.

Today, Acosta (pictured below) is guest principal répétiteur with The Royal Ballet, coaching the dancers

and leading rehearsals, as well as managing his own dance company Acosta Danza. He was recently appointed director of Birmingham Royal Ballet commencing in January 2020 (see *Dancing Times*, February 2019).

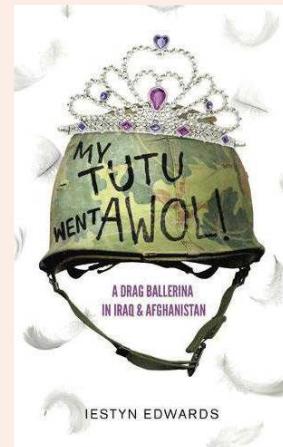
Yuli had its world premiere at the San Sebastian Film Festival, where it won the Best Screenplay Award. It has gone on to receive five nominations for the Spanish Goya awards including Best New Actor for Carlos Acosta, Best Cinematography and Best Adapted Screenplay.

Modern Films will release *Yuli* in cinemas on April 12. Tickets for the screening at the Linbury Theatre on April 3 are £25 and can be purchased at roh.org.uk or by calling 020 7304 400. For a list of regional cinemas that will be screening the ROH event, go to acostafilm.com.

NICOLA RAYNER



Other releases



★ My Tutu Went AWOL!

This entertaining paperback (£9.99, published by Unbound) is written by the bass baritone singer Iestyn Edwards who is also known as the larger-than-life drag ballerina, Madame Galina. He has won a special place on the London cabaret circuit and, as such, was engaged to perform for the troops during the Iraq war and then, subsequently, in Afghanistan. This memoir details his experiences there as a comedy performer.

Edwards not only describes wittily how his act is appreciated by his new-found audience, but also reveals the dangers faced not only by him and his fellow comedians during a time of conflict, but also those of the soldiers. Most revealing of all is the unlikely friendship he strikes up with Stacks, a tough Royal Marine Commando who comes to his rescue more than once. ■

JONATHAN GRAY



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New things to try

Roch Valley Medley leotard



The new Roch Valley Medley girls' skirted leotard is perfect for class uniform or younger dancers. The leotard is a new addition to Roch Valley's popular range of microfibre garments, with a false wrap attached skirt, a ruched front and microfibre fabric for comfort and durability. The Medley is available in nine colours, from ages three to four up to 11–13. For more information, go to roch-valley.co.uk.

Evelyn top and Olivia skirt

The Evelyn top and Olivia skirt make their debut this season in the brand new Sara and Andrea range at DSI London, inspired by the classic Italian style of the UK Open Professional Ballroom champions Andrea Ghigiarelli and Sara Andracchio. With a crepe leotard bodice, the Evelyn top features a gorgeous off-the-shoulder Bardot style neckline, finished with a satin trim, while the Olivia skirt is the epitome of simple elegance in panelled crepe, with a satin finish on the hem and a stylish satin belt. Available in black and burgundy, in small, medium and large, the Evelyn top retails at £82.50 (£99.00 inc VAT) and the Olivia skirt at £187.50 (£225.00 inc VAT). For more information, visit dsi-london.com.



Move Dance leotards

Move Dance leotards, from £10, are perfect for auditions, performances, exams and

dance classes. Stay traditional with classic silhouettes or explore their fashion leotards at movedancewear.com.

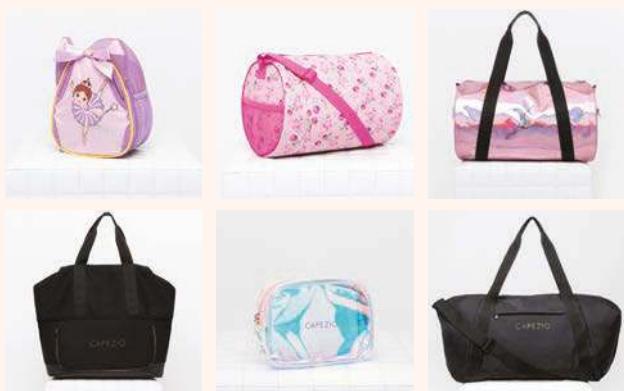


Rete fishnet tights

Made in Italy, the Rete fishnet tights from Rumpf are extremely comfortable and of top quality. Available in four colours – nude,

toast, light toast and black – and sizes from ten/twelve to large/extralarge, the tights, priced €19.95, are made from 80 per cent polyamide and 20 per cent elastane. For more information, visit rumpf.net.

Capezio bags



Capezio has launched a brand new range of bags suited to dancers of all ages. Ranging from the Sugar Plum (B208) and Chloe backpacks (B207) for children, to the Signature Tote (B223) and Ballet Squad Duffle (B229) for adults, this range covers all bases. A perfect way to keep all your dance accessories stylishly safe, this range will be available to buy from your local retailer from May onwards or keep your eye on capezio.com.



Education

Auditions, performances, funding, summer schools and awards



IDS Dance Teacher Convention

International Dance Supplies (IDS) has announced details of its annual Dance Teacher Convention (DTC) on August 13–14, where delegates have the opportunity to take class together, and learn new routines and tips from industry professionals in the prestigious environment of Elmhurst Ballet School.

The DTC offers 36 classes, ranging from full-on dance routines to technique classes, with the chance to try out new genres and ideas to help teachers develop their dance school. Delegates can build their own timetable to suit their requirements and choose to come for just one or two classes, or stay for the whole day and take advantage of the one- and two-day passes, starting at only £60.

Teachers can decide whether they want to dance for the pure joy of it or prefer to observe classes and make notes to take back to their own studios. Many classes are technique-based or will introduce a new genre to teachers. For 2019, IDS staff have listened to customers and will be introducing exciting new sessions to give them ideas on how to increase their appeal to a wider audience.

Highlights include West End and television star Adam Garcia giving two tap masterclasses, stars of the London stage – including Joseph Prowse, Kelly Ewings and Layla Harrison – teaching the latest routines and combinations, and popular jazz, commercial and street classes offering teachers the chance to enjoy fast-moving sessions to take back to their own pupils.

Ballet is well provided for this year, led by an excellent masterclass from Royal Ballet soloist Nicol Edmonds, who will be coming back to his old school to teach. Other classes will be run by Anna Du Boisson, principal of West London School of Dance,

"The convention gives teachers the chance to meet their peers, swap stories and ideas and learn from the experience of colleagues"

Vanessa Hooper, principal of the Skelton Hooper School of Dance, Emma Northmore, founder and artistic director of Ballet Boost, and Sarah Platt, tutor at RAD Headquarters, who will be introducing Silver Swans to the group.

By popular demand, convention regular Anne Walker will be hosting a business session, as will IDS IT experts, who will

Below: Adam Garcia.



be discussing solutions to administration nightmares and ways to improve the efficiency of a dance business. If that wasn't enough, there will be sessions in acro dance, self-expression, chair-based dance, an injuries clinic and more.

The convention gives teachers the chance to meet their peers, swap stories and ideas and learn from the experience of colleagues. As it takes place at the start-of-a-year dance season, the IDS showroom will be open for teachers to view the new 2019–20 range of costumes and dancewear, including the new Revolution and Plume collections.

More than 200 new costumes will be on show and attendees will be the first to see the 2019 IDS catalogue. Another benefit will be an end-of-season sale, where there will be some amazing bargains available. Delegates can take advantage of the discounts and go home with new costumes for their collection.

The IDS DTC is open to all dance teachers. Every class counts towards their Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and is endorsed by the Council for Dance, Drama and Musical Theatre (CDMT). It's an ideal place to meet up, get re-vitalised for the new season and, most important, have fun and just dance. For full details, visit idsdanceteacher.com or call the DTC co-ordinator on 01626 882 206.



Mikah Smillie steps down from NYB

Mikah Smillie stepped down as artistic director of National Youth Ballet (NYB) last month after leading the company for three years. She was appointed in 2016 following the death of founding director Jill Tookey, and has programmed three highly successful seasons.

Smillie, who has a longstanding association with NYB spanning over 11 years, said: "I feel hugely privileged to have led this extraordinary company of young creative talent. I'm proud of all we have achieved together and look forward to seeing the company's unique artistic vision fly in the many years to come."

Smillie's achievements during her artistic leadership include broadening the company's national reach by moving the artistic base to

Above: Mikah Smillie.

the Midlands and increasing audition venues across the country; performances in Birmingham and at Sadler's Wells in London, reaching audiences of 2,500 annually; mentoring the Beyond Ballet initiative, through which 13 new ballets for young audiences have been created by young choreographers, many of them women; putting plans in place to develop NYB's work further, including a health and well-being initiative; and continuing the NYB tradition of bringing leading figures of the dance world, including Matthew Bourne, Antony Dowson, Etta Murfitt, Ruth Brill, Christopher Hampson and Drew McOnie to the company to contribute to the creative work.

The trustees of NYB said: "We have been incredibly ➤

Dance On

DANCE ON, A NEW SERIES OF DANCE CLASSES for older adults in Bradford, Doncaster and Leeds, was launched last month. Supported by National Lottery funding from Sport England, Dance On sees newly-appointed dance artists working with various community groups to set up new classes across the three cities.

Designed to be a way to make friends, move to music and have fun, the sessions are targeting people over the age of 55, and are open to anyone. Participants don't need any experience of dance, and it's possible for people even with limited mobility to take part, either standing or sitting.

Five groups are already meeting regularly in venues across Bradford, seven around Leeds and six in Doncaster. Many more are scheduled to start in the coming weeks. Choreographer Arlene Phillips, patron of One Dance UK, says: "Dance On is a wonderful dance programme that's fun and social. Everyone is welcome and the Dance On team will match the moves to your ability. So feel good, keep moving and Dance On!"

Dance On is delivered by a partnership of One Dance UK, Yorkshire Dance and darts (Doncaster Community Arts) and funded by Sport England thanks to money raised by National Lottery players. In time, the partnership aims to be running dozens of groups across Yorkshire. Anyone can attend their first Dance On session for free, and admission prices are being kept to a minimum to ensure they are as accessible as possible, with many offering free places in every session.

Any venue or organisation interested in setting up a new Dance On group in Leeds or Bradford is invited to contact Adie Nivison at Yorkshire Dance on 0113 243 9867 or adienivison@yorkshiredance.com. To set up a group in Doncaster, contact Amy Knowles on 01302 341 662 or amy@thepoint.org.uk. Find out more details of sessions near you at dance-on.org.



Above: Arlene Phillips.

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An Introduction to Elmhurst, 2013

Elmhurst Ballet School: number

Elmhurst Ballet School is a world-renowned centre of excellence in training for classical ballet. The school works together to help the students become the best they can be. The school attracts students from around the world demands - artistically accomplished, confident and successful.

Elmhurst Ballet School: number

Elmhurst's innovative and pioneering health and well-being programme aims to help dancers avoid and manage injury, and also the emotional and mental challenges of a career in dance.

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fortunate to have Mikah Smillie at the helm as artistic director. Mikah worked with our founder Jill and embodies the passion, and commitment to quality and excellence that National Youth Ballet is famous for."

The 2019 National Youth Ballet season will be overseen by an interim artistic team led by Drew McOnie and Ruth Brill, both NYB alumni with a longstanding association with the company. Beyond the 2019 season, NYB is seeking to recruit a new artistic director to work alongside the executive director to deliver the company's next chapter. Details on the application process can be found at nationalyouthballet.org.

Choreographers of the future

One Dance UK has launched its search for the choreographers of the future. The programme, known as Young Creatives, is looking to attract young people between the ages of 15 and 19 (up to 25 for those with disabilities), to take part and explore their choreographic creativity. Successful applicants to this year's scheme will have the opportunity to develop their ideas, supported by a mentor, before presenting it at the Linbury Theatre of the Royal Opera House. The programme will culminate with a special performance of Young Creatives' work as part of the U.Dance National Youth Dance Festival at London's Southbank Centre on July 20-21.

Elmhurst Ballet Company

Elmhurst Ballet School launched Elmhurst Ballet Company, its new company made up of its final-year students, with an inaugural programme titled *Origins*



Above: Ryan Felix in the Hamlet solo from David Bintley's *The Shakespeare Suite*.

performed in the school's Studio Theatre on February 8. The aim of the company, under the artistic direction of Robert Parker and supported by Birmingham Royal Ballet, is to give the Elmhurst students valuable performing experience in advance of their graduation, and the programme – which ranged from the classicism of Marius Petipa and Lev Ivanov to the contemporary dance style of Wayne McGregor (who has just been appointed vice president of Elmhurst) – was a stimulating challenge for the young dancers.

If the programme did nothing else, it introduced the public to an exciting young talent in the name of Ryan Felix – more of him in a moment – but despite some initial and understandable nerves, *Origins* succeeded

wonderfully in displaying the dancers' potential, as well as their versatility. The evening kicked off with Amy Turner-Daly's *Adrenaline*, which put the whole company through its paces in a snappy dance, but it was followed by a remarkably mature account of the Balcony pas de deux from Kenneth MacMillan's *Romeo and Juliet*, where, dancing to the lovely Juliet of Ellie Hennequin, Ryan Felix demonstrated his exceptional stamina, partnering and acting skills as Romeo, as well as silky-smooth technique. Magnetic and appealing, Felix made one sit up immediately and take notice, a quality he also brought to the jazzy ennui of Hamlet's solo from David Bintley's *The Shakespeare Suite*, and also to his classical dancing in the Grand Pas from Petipa's *Paquita*.

The ensemble brought considerable style and assurance to *Paquita*, which closed the evening,

with Kirsty Walker, Nina Avrillon-Rivault and Andrea Canalicchio relishing their delicious variations, and Hennequin whizzing through her solo and the fouettés in the coda with panache. I did think, however, the company was much more exposed and less confident in the extract from Act II of *Swan Lake*, although the Cygnets were swift and neat. In other pieces, Avrillon-Rivault brought sweet charm to the "Lily of Laguna" duet from Bintley's *Hobson's Choice* with Samuel Parham, and Amelia Hancock slinked her way through the Sugar Rum Cherry solo from Bintley's *The Nutcracker Sweeties*. The dancers looked most at home, however, in the extracts from McGregor's *Entity*, which they performed with exactitude and full-hearted commitment. You couldn't help but admire their dedication. ■

JONATHAN GRAY

Banishing the butterflies

This month, we consider how to channel performance anxiety into a more positive form of energy

Performance anxiety or "stage fright" affects a surprisingly wide swathe of the population, of all ages and experience, from actors, dancers, singers and musicians to athletes and public speakers. As a dancer, whether your choice of style is ballet, ballroom, contemporary or hip hop, there is no escaping from the fact that at some point you will have to perform while others watch you – and these may be fellow students, teachers, examiners, competition judges, prospective employers or an audience of many thousands.

Understanding anxiety

Even the most seasoned of performers may hesitate when faced with the prospect of stepping onto a stage, surrounded by bright lights, and facing the undivided attention of a large group of people. For most individuals in this situation they worry about embarrassing themselves in front of others or appearing to be unable to achieve as successfully as they would like.

While it is important to recognise there is a

difference between dealing with the intermittent symptoms of pre-performance nerves, as against feeling a general overwhelming sense of anxiety, both are a form of stress that can sap an individual's confidence and limit their potential.

Most of us will have experienced at least some of the symptoms of anxiety, where you may experience trembling, have a dry mouth, increased heart rate, sweaty palms and nausea. When faced with potential danger, the body's natural approach is to adopt the "fight or flight" reaction. Although the conscious mind knows you are unlikely to be faced by a tiger when you appear on stage, nonetheless, the subconscious mind triggers a response that this might actually happen, with a resultant surge of adrenaline and cortisol.

Both these hormones relax the muscles of the lungs allowing more oxygen into the body, speeding up the heart rate, enabling oxygen to be carried by the blood to the brain and muscles. This extra oxygen allows the brain to increase focus and concentration; conversely it can also lead to a feeling of light-headedness.

Increased blood flow delivers glucose to the muscles so they are ready to react, sometimes causing involuntary shaking when they tense in preparation

for action. The blood is directed away from other systems including the digestion, which may slow down, potentially leading to stomach upsets and a feeling of nausea. As your heart rate and breathing increases, the body begins to heat up and, in an effort to cool down, you begin sweating, while hands and feet can tingle or feel cold.

How do I deal with it?

Studies have shown there is a greater level of anxiety in ballet dancers than other groups of dancers, with soloists and principals reporting more symptoms than members of the corps de ballet or ensembles.¹

For many dancers, their main concern is the feeling they are "out of control". Sometimes this may be due to a lack of understanding of what is going on within their body, leading to a sense of panic. Rather than ignoring these feelings, learn to accept them for what they are. Instead, concentrate on turning such thoughts into positive energy, enabling you to be at your best while performing.

Information and education are important in helping dancers cope with performance anxiety. Much of the issue is about learning to work with your body and being able to use the response in a positive way without allowing panic to set in.

Remind yourself that no matter how these symptoms make you feel, this is a perfectly natural reaction,

built into the system for protection and, provided there is no real physical danger, this anxiety can be controlled by your mind.

Music, visualisation and bananas

Do everything you can to minimise potentially stressful elements. Preparation is the key to gaining confidence – practice and rehearse as much as possible so you are familiar with the movements involved. The better you know your steps, the less anxiety you will feel about the risk of forgetting them; muscle memory is encouraged through regular practice.



Music being used for your performance can provide a useful form of support. As you become familiar with the music you may find it will help you to connect specific movements with each part of the work; this can be a guide to rely on if you feel unsure about what you should be doing and when. Contemporary dance may not always include music as part of the performance; dancers can choose instead to focus on different sounds – or even words if a spoken text is being used – to provide that assistance.

Familiarise yourself with the area, building or stage where you will be performing and, if possible, rehearse there, as this can help you to feel less anxious. Visualisation can be particularly constructive.

Imagine yourself performing on stage and, while making the scenario as realistic as possible, ensure you use positive images, add a supportive audience and remove any sense of fear.

Learn to calm your mind through meditation, yoga or progressive muscle relaxation. Make sure you have plenty of rest, and instead of looking at your mobile phone screen before you go to sleep, try listening to some guided meditation.

Relieve tension in the body by doing some deep breathing whenever you are anxious and find yourself breathing rapidly. In the lead-up to a performance, tensing and releasing muscles helps to disperse adrenaline and release nervous energy. Just before you go on stage, remember

to stretch thoroughly, which will help put you in the right frame of mind as well as relaxing the body.

Drinking strong coffee or alcohol is not advisable ahead of a performance, and bear in mind that eating sugary snacks can cause a spike in energy levels followed by a dip; bananas, raisins or yoghurt are likely to be more sustaining. Certain medications cause some of the symptoms of anxiety, and using beta blockers, which block the effects of adrenalin, may be risky for dancers as they can interfere with muscle tension and potentially affect performance.

Think positively

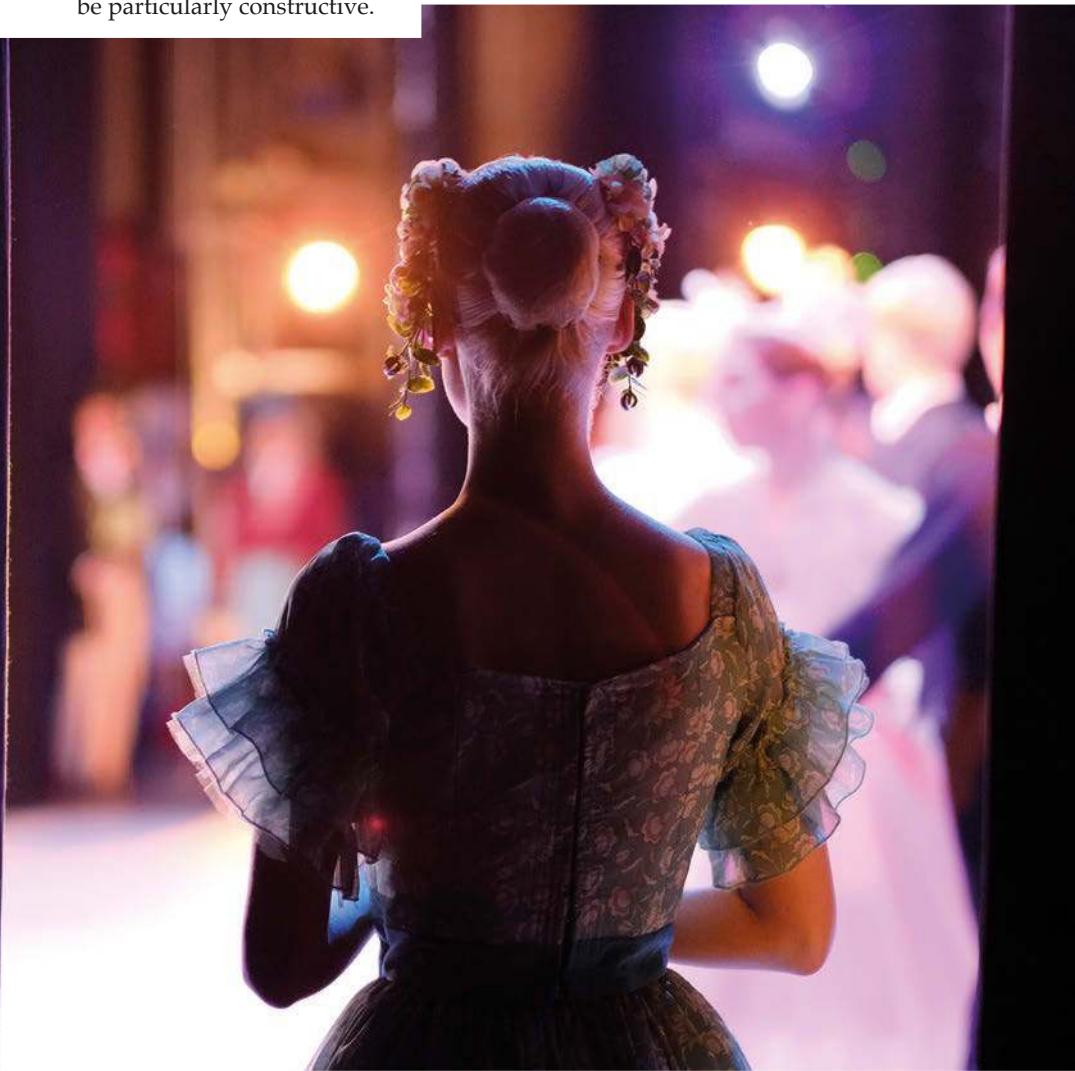
Inevitably, the degree of performance anxiety experienced by dancers

varies widely, depending on their temperament and the situation they may be in. Nonetheless, maintaining a certain level of adrenaline helps you to focus and channel your nervous energy into achieving a satisfying and successful performance. Some individuals welcome a sense of nervousness as they feel this contributes to the overall excitement they experience around performing. On the other hand, when a dancer is overly anxious, this can only disturb their sense of equilibrium and is unlikely to result in a good performance overall. Equally, it is not always helpful to be too relaxed, since this approach may reduce your ability to concentrate and could lead to a degree of carelessness.

The first few seconds are the most challenging part of any performance – once they are over it will feel easier as you become more immersed in what you are doing. Above all, think positively. Enjoy performing and being in the moment, and try to project that sense of enjoyment to the audience. Maintain a sense of perspective, no matter what happens on stage – even if you do forget a couple of steps, keep on going and improvise if necessary.

Acknowledging stress

Sharing your thoughts, feelings and concerns with family and friends can be an important aspect of minimising stress, although there may still be times when you also need a further degree of advice or support. Students or dancers within a larger organisation, either a school or company, should be able to discuss any worries they may have, in confidence, with a teacher, counsellor or appropriate ➤





health professional. Independent dancers may not always know where or whom to approach if they feel the need to discuss their worries. Seek advice from your doctor or contact One Dance UK who will be happy to provide relevant information.

Everyone has to find their own way of dealing with performance anxiety, and to work out an approach that helps ease their nerves. There should never be any sense of embarrassment about acknowledging this form of stress, it is more important to be equipped with the right tools to cope with the issue. Learning how to manage performance anxiety should be part of every dancer's training.

Creating confidence

As a physiotherapist, Shirley Hancock has considerable experience of working with dancers in most genres. "Anxiety is a complicated issue altogether," says Hancock. "When dancers are tense they breathe into their

upper chest and get out of breath more easily, so do not use the lateral expansion in the chest that they need to be able to perform movements, such as turns. This can give the impression that a dancer is unfit, which is absolutely not the case.

"When a dancer is anxious, the trapezius muscle in the back tightens, therefore the shoulder blades are not anchored down as they should be, and rise up. Consequently the quality of arm movement that is so essential in dance is reduced, and they become very stiff in the neck and shoulders as a result.

"Good movement patterns need to be well established to provide support. I'm a great believer in good teachers – their attitude towards the student should help create a confident performer. The more confidence a dancer has, the better they will feel."

Tea and toast

Perhaps there is some comfort in learning that

even celebrated dancers at the top of their game can still experience a level of performance anxiety.

Mikhail Baryshnikov took the view²: "There is no magic pill, but by the time those nerves hit, there's nowhere to go but forward." Rudolf Nureyev made the point³: "In a sense, we are paid for our fear." Apparently, he dealt with pre-performance nerves by taking a scalding hot bath along with well-sugared cups of tea and plenty of toast, while making numerous phone calls, using practical activity to dissipate any anxiety.

Royal Ballet principal, Lauren Cuthbertson⁴, answered a series of Q&A tweets in 2013, addressing how she had learned to deal with nerves: "I get nervous just before everything comes together in the rehearsal process. Also just before I go out on stage... by the time I'm on, luckily you're so into the moment

that you're not conscious of your nerves. When I was younger I suffered more because I was trying to emulate a perfect rehearsal on the stage, whereas now the stage is the best place to be to deliver a better performance – you have to throw yourself in, but whilst using your inner confidence to stay calm and keep concentration." ■

CONTACT

One Dance UK – Visit onedanceuk.org for further information, telephone 020 7713 0730, or email info@onedanceuk.org.

NOTES

1. Imogen Walker and Sanna Nordin-Bates in *Journal of Dance Medicine and Science*, IADMS, January 2010.

2. Quoted by Alison Beard in *Harvard Business Review*: "Life's Work: An interview with Mikhail Baryshnikov", May 2011.

3. Quoted by John Lombardi in *The New York Times Magazine*, December 13, 1981.

4. Hosted by Chris Shipman, head of Brand Engagement and Social Media, Royal Opera House, 2013.

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Personal

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Calendar

On stage this month

These listings are made as comprehensive as possible but inclusion does not necessarily mean recommendation

Copy deadline for possible entries is always the 1st of the preceding month. Please send to editorial@dancing-times.co.uk or post to the usual address. Entry subject to space available.

Inclusion of dates is dependent upon information received

In addition, we have details of some advance programmes from overseas/UK companies and UK tours. For more details (subject to availability) email as above or call 020 7250 3006.

All programmes, casts and information subject to change

UNITED KINGDOM

COMPANIES

Ballet Black

www.balletblack.co.uk
New 2019 programme of Ingoma (ch: November), Pendulum (ch: Lawrence) and Click (ch: Laplane)

APRIL

13: HATFIELD, UH Arts, Weston Auditorium Tel: 01707 285 395
17: NORTHAMPTON, Royal and Derngate Theatre Tel: 01604 624 811
23-24: BRISTOL, Old Vic Tel: 0117 987 7877
MAY
7-8: CAMBRIDGE ARTS THEATRE Tel: 01223 503 333
14: DERBY THEATRE Tel: 01332 593 939
23-24: BIRMINGHAM, DanceXchange Tel: 0121 667 6730
Tour continues - we hold details

BalletBoyz

www.balletboyz.com
UK tour of Them (ch: The Company) and Us (ch: Wheeldon). See website for booking details

APRIL

1-2: EXETER, Northcott Theatre
4: CHESTER, Storyhouse
6-7: LONDON, Richmond Theatre
10: GUILDFORD, G Live
14: GLASGOW, Theatre Royal
23: OXFORD, New Theatre
25: LONDON, artsdepot
27-28: BRISTOL, Old Vic

Ballet Central

www.balletcentral.co.uk
2019 UK tour performed by graduating students of Central School of Ballet in a programme that includes *Carousel Dances* (ch: Marney), *(in between)* (ch: Vardimon), *The Dying Swan* (ch: Richardson), extracts from *Valses nobles et sentimentales* (ch: Ashton) and *House of Birds* (ch: MacMillan), plus a new work by Thiago Soares. See website for booking details

APRIL

11: BURY ST EDMUND, Theatre Royal
14: LEEDS, Stanley and Audrey Burton Theatre
22-23: CAMBRIDGE, ADC Theatre
26: UPPINGHAM THEATRE
27: BIRMINGHAM, Crescent Theatre

MAY

2: NORWICH PLAYHOUSE
3: CHELMSFORD, Civic Theatre
9: LINCOLN, New Theatre Royal
11: SALE, Waterside
14: NEWBURY, Corn Exchange
30: SALISBURY PLAYHOUSE
Tour continues - we hold details

Ballet Theatre UK

www.ballettheatreuk.com
UK tour of Swan Lake (prod: Moore)
APRIL
2: CANNOCK, Prince of Wales Theatre Tel: 01543 578 762
3: WORKINGTON, Carnegie Theatre Tel: 01900 602 122
6M&E: TAUNTON, Tacchi - Morris Arts Centre Tel: 01823 414 141
7M&E: HENLEY ON THAMES, The Kenton Theatre Tel: 01491 575 698
11: NEWBURY, Arlington Arts Tel: 01635 244 246
12-13: SIDMOUTH, Manor Pavilion Tel: 01395 514 413
14M: BISHOP'S STORTFORD, Rhodes Arts Complex Tel: 01279 710 200
16: PETERBOROUGH, Key Theatre Tel: 01733 207 239
20: BRIDPORT ARTS CENTRE Tel: 01308 427 183
23: CARDIGAN, Theatr Mwldan Tel: 01239 621 200
24: BUILTH WELLS, Wyeside Arts Centre Tel: 01982 552 555
25: BIRMINGHAM, Crescent Theatre Tel: 0121 643 5858
27M: MONMOUTH, Blake Theatre Tel: 01600 719 401
28M: WARWICK ARTS CENTRE Tel: 024 7652 4524
30: WINCHESTER, Theatre Royal Tel: 01962 840 440
MAY
5: EASTBOURNE, Royal Hippodrome Tel: 01323 802 020
16: ROCHDALE, Middleton Arena Tel: 0300 303 8633
18: NEWBRIDGE MEMO Tel: 01495 243 252
21,22M&E: BURY ST EDMUND, Theatre Royal Tel: 01284 769 505
24: CHELMSFORD, Civic Theatre Tel: 01245 606 505
25M&E: ANDOVER, The Lights Tel: 01264 368 368
29: KETTERING, Tel: 0115 989 5555

The Lighthouse Theatre

Tel: 01536 414 141
31M&E: SOLIHULL,
The Core Theatre
Tel: 0121 704 6962
Tour continues - we hold details

UK tour of Margot Fonteyn Centenary Celebrations (dir: Moore)

MAY
11M&E: REDHILL, Harlequin Theatre Tel: 01737 276 500
12: LANCASTER, Grand Theatre Tel: 01524 64695
Tour continues - we hold details

The Ballroom Boys – Ian Waite and Vincent Simone

www.theballroomboys.com
UK tour of a new dance show featuring former *Strictly Come Dancing* professionals Ian Waite and Vincent Simone. See website for booking details

APRIL

30: COVENTRY, The Albany Theatre

MAY
1: WELLINGBOROUGH, Castle Theatre
2: HARLOW PLAYHOUSE
3: CLACTON, West Cliff Theatre
4: COLCHESTER, Mercury Theatre
5: CHELMSFORD, Civic Theatre
8: BURY ST EDMUND, The Apex
9: CRAWLEY, The Hawth
10: STEVENAGE, Gordon Craig Theatre
11: LOWESTOFT, Marina Theatre
12: LINCOLN, New Theatre Royal
16: CHESTERFIELD, Pomegranate Theatre

17: LEAMINGTON SPA, Royal Spa Centre
18: LICHFIELD, Garrick Theatre
19: CREWE, Lyceum Theatre
20: SHREWSBURY, Theatre Severn
22: WESTON-SUPER-MARE, The Playhouse

23: WEYMOUTH, Pavilion Theatre
24: EXMOUTH, Pavilion Theatre
25: TAUNTON, Brewhouse Theatre and Arts Centre
28: LIVINGSTON, Howden Park Centre
29: ABERDEEN, Tivoli Theatre
30: HAMILTON, The Townhouse
31: AYR, The Gaiety
Tour continues - we hold details

Birmingham Royal Ballet

www.brab.org.uk
UK tour of *Home from Home*, a programme that includes *Peter and the Wolf* (ch: Brill) and *A Season in Our World* (ch: Day, Holder, Monaghan)

MAY

10-11: CHELTENHAM, Everyman Theatre Tel: 01242 572 573
14-15: NORTHAMPTON, Royal and Derngate Theatre Tel: 01604 624 811
17-18: SHREWSBURY, Theatre Severn Tel: 01743 281 281
24-25: NOTTINGHAM, Theatre Royal Tel: 0115 989 5555

Blood Brothers

www.kenwright.com
UK tour of the stage musical by Willy Russell

APRIL

2-6: TORQUAY, Princess Theatre Tel: 0844 871 3023
9-13: SALFORD, The Lowry Tel: 0843 208 6000
15-20: LLANDUDNO, Venue Cymru Tel: 01492 872 000
23-27: BLACKPOOL, Opera House Tel: 0844 856 1111
30-May 4: SOUTHSEA, Kings Theatre Tel: 02392 828 282
Tour continues - we hold details

Burn the Floor

www.burnthefloor.com
The popular dance show returns for a UK tour with *Strictly Come Dancing*'s Kevin Clifton, Graziano Di Prima and Johannes Radebe. See website for booking details

APRIL

18: SOUTHPORT, The Atkinson
19: LIVERPOOL, Auditorium
20: MANCHESTER, The Bridgewater Hall
21: BIRMINGHAM, Alexandra Theatre
23: KING'S LYNN, Alive Corn Exchange
25: PETERBOROUGH, The Cresset
26: MARGATE, Winter Gardens
27: STEVENAGE, Gordon Craig Theatre
29: STOKE-ON-TRENT, Regent Theatre
Tour continues - we hold details

Clod Ensemble

www.clodensemble.com/placebo
UK tour of *On the High Road* (ch: Willson)

APRIL

24-25: LONDON, Queen Elizabeth Hall Tel: 020 3879 9555
MAY
8: DONCASTER, CAST Tel: 01302 303 959
15-16: PORTSMOUTH, New Theatre Royal Tel: 02392 649 000
20-21: OXFORD PLAYHOUSE Tel: 01865 305 300

Company Wayne McGregor

www.waynemcgregor.com
Tour of *Autobiography* (ch: McGregor)

APRIL

30: SALFORD, The Lowry Tel: 0843 208 6000
MAY
21: PORTSMOUTH, Theatre Royal Tel: 023 9264 9000

Corali

www.ruraltouring.org
As part of the Rural Touring Dance Initiative, Corali performs *Technicolour Everyday*. See website for booking details

APRIL

5: TROWBRIDGE, Town Hall Arts
6: PORTREATH, Millennium Hall
7: LAUNCESTON TOWN HALL

Dirty Dancing

www.dirtydancingontour.com

UK tour of the stage musical based on the 1987 movie

APRIL

1-6: **WOLVERHAMPTON, Grand Theatre**
Tel: 01902 429 212
8-13: **IPSWICH, Regent Theatre**
Tel: 01473 433 100
22-27: **MANCHESTER, Palace Theatre**
Tel: 0844 871 3019
30-May 4: **GUILDFORD, G Live**
Tel: 01483 369 350
Tour continues - we hold details

English National Ballet

www.ballet.org.uk

UK tour of *She Persisted*, a programme of works by female choreographers, including *Nora* (ch: Quagebeur), *Broken Wings* (ch: Lopez Ochoa), *The Rite of Spring* (ch: Bausch)

APRIL

2-13: **LONDON, Sadler's Wells**
Tel: 020 7863 8000

Emerging Dancer Competition
MAY

7: **LONDON, Sadler's Wells**
Tel: 020 7863 8000

Giovanni Pernice – Dance is Life

www.giovanniperstice.com

UK tour of a dance show starring *Strictly Come Dancing's* Giovanni Pernice with guest star Luba Mushtuk. See website for booking details

APRIL

1: **TELFORD, The Place**
2: **HEREFORD, The Courtyard**
4: **LOWESTOFT, Marina Theatre**
5: **FELIXSTOWE, The Spa Pavilion**
6: **Colchester, Mercury Theatre**

In the Willows

www.inthewillows.co.uk

UK tour of a new musical based on *The Wind in the Willows* featuring choreography by Rhimes Lecointe. Dancers appearing include Sheila Attah and Chris Fonseca

APRIL

2-6: **KESWICK, Theatre by the Lake**
Tel: 01768 774 411
9-10: **OXFORD PLAYHOUSE**
Tel: 01865 305 305

16-20: **YORK, Theatre Royal**
Tel: 01904 623 568

24-27: **MALVERN FORUM**
Tel: 01684 892 277

MAY

1-4: **BLACKPOOL, Grand Theatre**
Tel: 01253 290 190
9-11: **LONDON, New Wimbledon Theatre**
Tel: 0844 871 7646
22-26: **HORNCURCH, Queens Theatre**
Tel: 01708 443 333
29-Jun 1: **BRISTOL, Old Vic**
Tel: 0117 987 7877

James Wilton Dance

www.jameswiltondance.org.uk

UK tour of *Leviathan* (ch: Wilton), part of the Rural Dance Touring Initiative. See website for booking details

APRIL

5: **COALVILLE, Century Theatre**
6: **DRONFIELD, The Peel Centre**

Lila dance

www.ruraltouring.org

As part of the Rural Touring Dance

Initiative, the company will be performing *The Hotel Experience*. See website for booking details

MAY

9: **YARM SCHOOL**
10: **SETTLE, Victoria Hall**

Lost Dog

www.lostdogdance.co.uk
Spring UK tour of *Juliet* and *Romeo* (ch: Duke)

APRIL

13-14: **LONDON, Linbury Theatre, Royal Opera House**
Tel: 020 7304 4000

Mark Morris Dance Group

www.markmorrisdancegroup.org
UK tour of *Pepperland* (ch: Morris)

APRIL

2-3: **BRADFORD, Alhambra Theatre**
Tel: 01274 443 2000
5-6: **EDINBRGH, Festival Theatre**
Tel: 0131 529 6000
9-10: **CANTERBURY, Marlowe Theatre**
Tel: 0122 778 7787
12-13: **CARDIFF, Wales Millennium Centre**
Tel: 0292 063 6464
16-17: **PLYMOUTH, Theatre Royal**
Tel: 0175 226 7222
19-20: **SOUTHAMPTON, Mayflower Theatre**
Tel: 0238 071 1811
23-24: **NORWICH, Theatre Royal**
Tel: 0160 363 0000
26-27: **NEWCASTLE, Theatre Royal**
Tel: 0844 811 2121

Les Misérables

www.lesmis.com
UK tour of the musical with lyrics and music by Alain Boublil and Claude-Michel Schönberg

APRIL

2-May 11: **BIRMINGHAM HIPPODROME**
Tel: 0844 338 5000

Tour continues - we hold details

National Dance Company Wales

www.ndcwales.co.uk

Spring tour of *Afterimage* (ch: Melo), *Revellers' Mass* (ch: Finn), *Tundra* (ch: Morau) and *They Seek to Find the Happiness They Seem* (ch: Johnston)

APRIL

4: **SWANSEA, Taliesin Arts Centre**
Tel: 01792 602 060
9: **HUDDERSFIELD, Lawrence Batley Theatre**
Tel: 01484 430 528
24: **ABERYSTWYTH ARTS CENTRE**
Tel: 01970 623 232

MAY

1: **CARDIFF, Sherman Theatre**
Tel: 029 2064 6900
7: **SHREWSBURY, Theatre Severn**
Tel: 01743 281 281

New Adventures

www.new-adventures.net

Tour of *Swan Lake* (ch: Bourne)

APRIL

2-6: **NORWICH, Theatre Royal**
Tel: 01603 630 000

9-13: **LIVERPOOL EMPIRE**

Tel: 0844 871 3017

16-20: **LONDON, New Wimbledon Theatre**
Tel: 0844 871 7646

23-27: **HULL, New Theatre**

Tel: 01482 300 306

30-May 4: **WOKING,**

New Victoria Theatre

Tel: 0844 871 7627

MAY

7-18: **NEWCASTLE, Theatre Royal**
Tel: 0844 811 2121
21-25: **SHEFFIELD, Lyceum Theatre**
Tel: 0114 249 6000

Tour of *Romeo and Juliet* (ch: Bourne)

MAY

13-18: **LEICESTER, Curve**

Tel: 0116 242 3595

22-25: **BRADFORD, Alhambra Theatre**

Tel: 01274 432 000

28-Jun 1: **NORTHAMPTON, Royal and Derngate Theatre**

Tel: 01604 624 811

Tour continues - we hold details

Northern Ballet

www.northernballet.com

UK tour of *Victoria* (ch: Marston)

APRIL

2-6: **LEICESTER, Curve**

Tel: 0116 242 3595

10-13: **EDINBURGH, Festival Theatre**

Tel: 0131 529 6000

30-May 4: **MILTON KEYNES THEATRE**

Tel: 0844 871 7652

MAY

21-25: **CARDIFF, New Theatre**

Tel: 029 2087 8889

29-Jun 1: **BELFAST, Grand Opera House**

Tel: 028 9024 1919

Phoenix Dance Theatre

www.phoenixdancetheatre.co.uk

UK Spring tour of *The Rite of Spring* (ch: Saintus), *Left Unseen* (ch: Lebrun)

APRIL

2: **POOLE, Lighthouse**

Tel: 01202 280 000

9: **DONCASTER, CAST**

Tel: 01302 303 959

MAY

4: **MALVERN THEATRES**

Tel: 01684 892 277

8: **KESWICK, Theatre by the Lake**

Tel: 01768 774 411

11: **DUNDEE REP**

Tel: 01382 223 530

Tour continues - we hold details

Rambert

www.rambert.org.uk

UK tour of *PreSentient* (ch: McGregor), *new Motin work*, *In Your Rooms* (ch: Shechter)

MAY

3: **BROMLEY, Churchill Theatre**

Tel: 0844 871 7620

14-18: **LONDON, Sadler's Wells**

Tel: 020 7863 8000

Rambert2

www.rambert.org.uk

UK tour with a repertoire that includes new work by Benoit Swan Pouffer, E2 7SD (ch: Bonachela) and *Killer Pig* (ch: Eyal)

APRIL

2: **WINCHESTER, Theatre Royal**

Tel: 01962 840 440

4: **LONDON, artsdepot**

Tel: 020 8369 5454

MAY

24-25: **EDINBURGH, Kings Theatre**

Tel: 0131 529 6000

Tour continues - we hold details

Rock of Ages

www.rockofagesmusical.co.uk

UK tour of the musical directed and

choreographed by Nick Winston. See website for booking details

APRIL

2-6: **NOTTINGHAM, Theatre Royal**

8-13: **EASTBOURNE, Congress Theatre**

16-20: **BRISTOL HIPPODROME**

23-27: **YORK, Grand Opera House**

30-May 4: **EDINBURGH PLAYHOUSE**

Tour continues - we hold details

Rosie Kay Dance Company

www.rosiekay.co.uk

Tour of *5 Soldiers* (ch: Kay)

APRIL

2: **CARDIFF, Sherman Theatre**

Tel: 029 2064 6900

3: **STREET, Strode Theatre**

Tel: 01458 442 846

The Royal Ballet

LONDON | Royal Opera House

Tel: 020 7304 4000 | www.roh.org.uk

APRIL

1: **Don Quixote** (prod: Acosta) (Cuthbertson, Ball)

3: **Don Quixote** (Naghdi, Sambé)

4: **Don Quixote** (Magri, Campbell)

10: **Romeo and Juliet** (MacMillan) (Cuthbertson, Ball)

13M: **Romeo and Juliet** (O'Sullivan, Sambé)

13E: **Romeo and Juliet** (Takada, McRae)

26: **Romeo and Juliet** (as April 10)

27M: **Romeo and Juliet** (Hamilton, Clarke)

27E: **Romeo and Juliet** (as April 13)

MAY

1: **Romeo and Juliet** (Lamb, Muntagirov)

4M: **Romeo and Juliet** (as May 1)

4E: **Romeo and Juliet** (Hamilton, Clarke)

8: **Within the Golden Hour** (ch: Wheeldon) (Stix-Brunell, Cuthbertson, Lamb, Muntagirov, Hirano, McRae)

new **Cherkaoui work** (TBA), **Flight Pattern** (ch: Pite) (McNally, Sambé)

9: **Within the Golden Hour** (Choe, Hayward, Takada, Campbell, Zucchetti, Dyer), new **Cherkaoui work** (TBA), **Flight Pattern** (as May 8)

11M: **Romeo and Juliet** (Hayward, Corrales)

11E: **Romeo and Juliet** (as May 1)

13: **Romeo and Juliet** (Stix-Brunell, Hirano)

14: **Romeo and Juliet** (as May 11M)

15: **Within the Golden Hour** (as May 8), new **Cherkaoui work** (as May 8), **Flight Pattern** (as May 8)

16: **Within the Golden Hour** (as May 8), new **Cherkaoui work** (as May 8), **Flight Pattern** (as May 8)

17: **Romeo and Juliet** (Nuñez, Clarke)

18M: **Within the Golden Hour** (as May 9), new **Cherkaoui work** (as May 8), **Flight Pattern** (as May 8)

18E: **Within the Golden Hour** (as May 8), new **Cherkaoui work**, **Flight Pattern** (as May 8)

21: **Within the Golden Hour** (as May 9), new **Cherkaoui work**, **Flight Pattern** (as May 8)

22: **Romeo and Juliet** (Osipova, Hallberg)

23M: **Romeo and Juliet** (Naghdi, Ball)

23E: **Romeo and Juliet** (as May 17)

25M: **Romeo and Juliet** (as May 13)

25E: **Romeo and Juliet** (as May 11M)

29: **Romeo and Juliet** (as May 17)

Calendar

Scottish Ballet

www.scottishballet.co.uk
Scottish Ballet celebrates its 50th anniversary with *Spring*!, a double bill including a new work by resident choreographer Sophie Laplane and *Elite Syncopations* (ch: MacMillan)

APRIL
4-6: GLASGOW, Theatre Royal
Tel: 0800 912 6971
11-13: ABERDEEN,
His Majesty's Theatre
Tel: 01224 641 122

MAY
2-4: EDINBURGH, Festival Theatre
Tel: 0131 529 6000

Yorke Dance Project

www.yorkedanceproject.co.uk
Twenty, a Spring programme featuring new works by Robert Cohan, Sophia Stoller and Yolande Yorke-Edgell, plus a revival of Kenneth MacMillan's *Playground*

APRIL
4: BANBURY, The Mill Arts Centre
Tel: 01295 279 002

6: SALISBURY ARTS CENTRE
Tel: 01722 320 333

26: SWINDON DANCE
Tel: 01793 601700

MAY
14: LONDON, Clore Studio
Upstairs, Royal Opera House
Tel: 020 7240 1200 (Playground only)

15: LONDON, Clore Studio
Upstairs, Royal Opera House
Tel: 020 7240 1200 (new
Cohan work only)

17: LONDON, Clore Studio
Upstairs, Royal Opera House
Tel: 020 7240 1200

CINEMA

Bolshoi Ballet Cinema Season
www.picturehouses.co.uk
www.cineworld.co.uk
Screenings of live and recorded ballet performances across the UK. See website for venue details

APRIL
7: *The Golden Age* (ch: Grigorovich)

MAY
19: *Carmen Suite* (ch: Alonso), *Petrushka* (ch: Clug) *Live*

Royal Opera House cinema season 2018/2019
www.roh.org.uk/cinema
Screenings of live and recorded performances across the UK from the Royal Opera House

MAY
16: *Within the Golden Hour* (ch: Wheeldon), *new Cherkaoui work*, *Flight Pattern* (ch: Pite) *Live*

EVENTS

London Ballet Circle
www.lbbc.org.uk
Events are held at the Civil Service Club, 13-15 Gt Scotland Yard, London SW1 or The Swiss Church, Endell Street, London WC2H. Tickets £5 for members, £8 for non-members. Everyone welcome

APRIL
18: The guest will be Royal Ballet principal *Yasmine Naghdi*

FESTIVALS

Let's Dance International
Frontiers 2019

LEICESTER | Tel: 0333 666 3366

www.ldif.co.uk

APRIL

29-May 11: The annual Leicester dance festival returns, with appearances from New York's Evidence Dance Company. See website for full programme details

VENUES

SCOTLAND

Festival Theatre

EDINBURGH | Tel: 0131 529 6000

www.edtheatres.com

APRIL

5-6: *Mark Morris Dance Group* in *Pepperland* (ch: Morris)
10-13: *Northern Ballet* in *Victoria* (ch: Marston)

MAY
2-4: *Scottish Ballet* in *Dextera* (ch: Laplane), *Elite Syncopations* (ch: MacMillan)
28: *Burn the Floor*
30: *Rosie Kay Company* in *10 Soldiers* (ch: Kay)

WALES

Wales Millennium Centre

CARDIFF | Tel: 0870 040 2000

www.wmc.org.uk

APRIL

12-13: *Mark Morris Dance Group* in *Pepperland* (ch: Morris)

NORTH WEST

Grand Theatre, Blackpool

BLACKPOOL | Tel: 01253 290 190

www.blackpoolgrand.co.uk

APRIL

30-May 4: *In the Willows*

MAY

11: *Northern Ballet* in *Puss in Boots*

The Lowry, Salford

MANCHESTER | Tel: 0843 208 6000

www.thelowry.com

Lyric Theatre

APRIL

17-20: *Shen Yun*

30: *Company Wayne McGregor in Autobiography* (ch: McGregor)

MAY

3-4: *Strictly Come Dancing - The Professionals 2019*

8-11: *Northern Ballet* in *The Great Gatsby* (ch: Nixon)

29: *Russell Maliphant Company* in *Silent Lines* (ch: Maliphant)

NORTH EAST

Dance City Theatre

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

Tel: 0191 261 0505

www.dancecity.co.uk

APRIL

10-11: *Tick Tock Bridget*

in Rejoining Jane

27: *Company of Others* in *Crackle, Dust*. (ch: Iftkhar)

MAY

4: *Russell Maliphant Company* in *Silent Lines* (ch: Maliphant)

9: *Seeta Patel in The Rite of Spring* (ch: Patel)

23-26: *Okham's Razor in This Time*

YORKSHIRE AND HUMBERSIDE

Cast

DONCASTER | Tel: 01302 303 959

www.castindoncaster.com

APRIL

9: *Phoenix Dance Theatre* in *The Rite of Spring* (ch: Saintus), *Left Unseen* (ch: Lebrun)

MAY

8: *Clod Ensemble* in *On the High Road* (ch: Willson)

15-16: *Gary Clarke Company* in *Wasteland* (ch: Clarke)

Sheffield Lyceum

SHEFFIELD | Tel: 0114 249 6000

www.sheffieldtheatres.co.uk

MAY

21-25: *New Adventures* in *Swan Lake* (ch: Bourne)

Stanley and Audrey Burton Theatre

LEEDS | Tel: 0113 220 8008

www.theatreleeds.com

APRIL

2-5: *Northern Ballet* in *Puss in Boots* (ch: Lee)

14: *Ballet Central*

MAY

2: *James Cousins Company* in *Epilogues* (ch: Cousins)

MIDLANDS

Birmingham Hippodrome and DanceXchange

BIRMINGHAM

Tel: 0844 338 5000 (Hippodrome) / 0121 667 6730 (DanceXchange)

www.birminghamhippodrome.com (BH)

www.danceexchange.org.uk (DX)

APRIL

2-May 11: *Les Misérables* (BH)

9: *Russell Maliphant in Silent Lines* (ch: Maliphant) (DX)

MAY

9: *Nikki and JD in KNOT* (DX)

23-24: *Ballet Black* (DX)

Curve

LEICESTER | Tel: 0116 242 3595

www.curveonline.co.uk

APRIL

2-6: *Northern Ballet* in *Victoria* (ch: Marston)

12: *Alexander Whitley Company* in *8 Minutes* (ch: Whitley)

26: *Vincent Dance Theatre* in *Shut Down* (ch: Vincent)

MAY

Let's Dance International

Frontiers Festival

2: *Signatures*

3: *Urban Jazz Dance Company*

4: *LDIF+ Showcase*

8: *Autograph*

10-11: *Ronald K Brown - Evidence: A Dance Company*

13-18: *New Adventures in Romeo and Juliet* (ch: Bourne)

Royal and Derngate

NORTHAMPTON

Tel: 01604 624 811

www.royalandderngate.co.uk

APRIL

17: *Ballet Black* in *Ingoma* (ch: November), *Pendulum* (ch: Lawrence), *Click* (ch: Laplane)

18: *Aljaž Škorjanec* and *Janette Manrara* in *Remembering The Movies*

MAY

14-15: *Birmingham Royal Ballet in Seasons In Our World* (ch: Day, Holder, Monaghan), *Peter and the Wolf* (ch: Brill)

28-Jun 1: *New Adventures in Romeo and Juliet* (ch: Bourne)

EASTERN ENGLAND

Jerwood DanceHouse

IPSWICH

Tel: 01473 295 230

www.danceeast.co.uk

APRIL

5-6: *Russell Maliphant Company* in *Silent Lines* (ch: Maliphant)

20: *National Youth Dance Company* in *Madhead* (ch: Seva)

MAY

10: *Seeta Patel in The Rite of Spring* (ch: Patel)

Theatre Royal

BURY ST EDMUND

Tel: 01284 769 505

www.theatreroyal.org

APRIL

11: *Ballet Central*

MAY

21-22: *Ballet Theatre UK* in *Swan Lake* (prod: Moore)

SOUTH EAST

The Churchill

BROMLEY | Tel: 0844 871 7620

www.churchilltheatre.co.uk

MAY

3: *Rambert in PreSentient* (ch: McGregor), *In Your Rooms* (ch: Shechter)

G Live

GUILDFORD | Tel: 01483 369 350

www.glive.co.uk

APRIL

10: *The Ballet Boyz in Them* (ch: The Company) and *Us* (ch: Wheeldon)

MAY

9: *Russell Maliphant Company* in *Silent Lines* (ch: Maliphant)

SOUTH WEST

The Lighthouse

POOLE | Tel: 0844 406 8666

www.lighthousepoole.co.uk

APRIL

2: *Phoenix Dance Theatre* in *The Rite of Spring* (ch: Saintus), *Left Unseen* (ch: Lebrun)

MAY

9: *Burn the Floor*

Swindon Dance

SWINDON | Tel: 01793 601 700

www.swindondance.org.uk

APRIL

26: *Yorke Dance Project*

LONDON

Barbican Centre

Silk Street, EC2

Tel: 0845 120 7500

www.barbican.org.uk

APRIL

16: *Merce Cunningham Trust – Night of 100 Solos: A Centennial Event*

MAY

22-25: *Pam Tanowitz in Four Quartets* (ch: Tanowitz)

30-Jun 1: *Faso Danse Théâtre* and *Halles de Schaerbeek/Serge Aimé Coulibaly in Kalakuta Republik* (ch: Coulibaly)

Lilian Baylis Studio

Sadler's Wells, Rosebery Avenue, EC1

Tel: 020 7863 8000

www.sadlerswells.com

APRIL

4-5: Albert Quesada and Zoltán Vakulya in *OneTwoThreeOneTwo* (ch: Quesada, Vakulya)
24-25: *Nora in Where Home Is* (ch: McMann, Sikorski, Wesley and Hay)
MAY
9: *Wild Card*: Keira Martin

London Coliseum

St Martin's Lane, WC2
Tel: 020 7845 9300
www.eno.org

APRIL

7: *Ivan Putrov and guests in Against the Stream*, a gala celebrating ballet's greatest pioneers
26-Jun 8: *The Man of La Mancha*

Peacock Theatre

Portugal Street, London, WC2
Tel: 020 7863 8222
www.sadlerswells.com

APRIL

16-27: English National Ballet and English National Ballet School in *My First Ballet: Sleeping Beauty*
30-May 18: *Sisters Grimm, Mark Baldwin and Soweto Gospel Choir in INALA* (ch: Baldwin)
MAY
21-Jun 16: *Masters of Choreography in Beats on Pointe*

The Place

Duke's Road, WC1
Tel: 020 7121 1100 | www.theplace.org.uk

APRIL

3: *Alleyne Dance in The Other Side of Me* (ch: Alleyne)
9-10: *Encounter in The Kids Are All Right* (ch: Malarkey)
13: *Artists 4 Artists in 3 Rounds of Amp* (ch: Pefkou, Franklin, Nash)
17-18: *Flexer and Sandilin / Dybwikdans in Curiouser*
25-30: *Fevered Sleep in Men and Girls Dance* (ch: The Company)

Royal Opera House

Covent Garden, WC2
Tel: 020 7304 4000 | www.roh.org.uk
For Main Stage see The Royal Ballet
Linbury Theatre (L),
Clore Studio Upstairs (CSU)
APRIL
3: Screening of the film *Yuli - The Carlos Acosta Story* (L)
11-12: *The Royal Ballet and Guests in Draft Works* (L)
13-14: *Lost Dog in Juliet and Romeo* (ch: Duke, Weinachter) (L)
MAY
14: *Yorke Dance Project in Playground* (ch: MacMillan) (CSU)
15: *Yorke Dance Project in Communion* (ch: Cohan) (CSU)
17: *Yorke Dance Project in Playground, Communion, Between and Within* (ch: Stoller), *Strandgarde 30* (ch: Yorke-Edgell) (CSU)
25-30: *Cast Public in 9* (ch: Blackburn) (L)

Sadler's Wells

Rosebery Avenue, EC1
Tel: 020 7863 8000
www.sadlerswells.com

APRIL

4-13: English National Ballet in *She Persisted - The Rite of Spring* (ch: Bausch), *Broken Wings* (ch: Lopez Ochoa), *Nora* (ch: Quagebeur)
16-17: *Damien Jalet and Kohei Nawa in Vessel* (ch: Jalet)
24-25: *Anne Teresa De*

Keersmaeker, Jean-Guihen Queyras and Rosas in Mitten wir im Leben sind/Bach6Cellosuiten
(ch: De Keersmaeker)
27-28: *Israel Galván in La Fiesta* (ch: Galván)

MAY

3-5: *Breakin' Convention 2019*
9-11: *Yang Liping in Rite of Spring* (ch: Liping)
14-18: *Rambert in PreSentient* (ch: McGregor), **new Motin work, In Your Rooms** (ch: Shechter)
24-25: *TAO Dance Theater in 4 & 9* (ch: Tao)
29-30: *San Francisco Ballet in Shostakovich Trilogy* (ch: Ratmansky)
31: *San Francisco Ballet in The Infinite Ocean* (ch: Liang), *Snowblind* (ch: Marston), *Björk Ballet* (ch: Pita)

Southbank Centre

Belvedere Road, London, SE1
Tel: 0871 663 2501
www.southbankcentre.co.uk

Queen Elizabeth Hall

APRIL
24-25: *Clod Ensemble in On the High Road* (ch: Willson)

MAY

7-10: *Deborah Colker Company in Cão Sem Plumas* (ch: Colker)

JUNE

20-21: *Natalia Osipova and Jonathan Goddard in The Mother* (ch: Pita)

LONDON MUSICALS

9 to 5: The Musical

www.9to5themusical.co.uk
SAVOY THEATRE, London WC2
Tel: 0844 871 7687, Prices: £20 - £99.50
ch: Stevens. Mats Wed & Sat

Ain't Misbehavin'

www.southwarkplayhouse.co.uk
SOUTHWARK PLAYHOUSE, London SE1
Tel: 020 7407 0234, Prices: £22 - £27.50
ch: Mabuse. Mats Tue & Sat
Limited season from Apr 19 to Jun 1

Aladdin

www.aladdinthemusical.co.uk
PRINCE EDWARD THEATRE, London W1
Tel: 0844 482 5151, Prices: from £28
ch: Nicholaw. Mats Thur & Sat

The Book of Mormon

www.bookofmormonlondon.com
PRINCE OF WALES THEATRE, London W1
Tel: 0844 482 5110, Prices: £39.50 - £97
ch: Nicholaw. Mats Wed & Sat

Come From Away

www.comefromawaylondon.co.uk
PHOENIX THEATRE, London WC2
Tel: 0844 871 7615, Prices: £25 - £95
dir: Ashley. Mats Wed & Sat

Everybody's Talking About Jamie

www.everybodystalkingaboutjamie.co.uk
APOLLO THEATRE, London W1
Tel: 0330 333 4809, Prices: £20 - £95
ch: Prince. Mats Wed & Sat

Fiddler on the Roof

www.atgtickets.com
PLAYHOUSE THEATRE, London WC2N

Tel: 0844 871 7631,
Prices: From £20, ch: Cole
Limited season until Jun 15

Hamilton

www.hamiltonthemusical.co.uk
VICTORIA PALACE THEATRE, London SW1
Tel: 0844 248 5000,
Prices: £37.50 - £200
ch: Blankenbuehler. Mats Thu & Sat

The Lion King

www.thelionking.co.uk
LYCEUM THEATRE, London E8
Tel: 0844 871 3000,
Prices: £20 - £52.50
ch: Fagan. Mats Wed, Sat & Sun

Little Miss Sunshine

www.littlemisssunshinemusical.com
ARCOLA THEATRE, London WC2
Tel: 020 7503 1646, Prices: £10 - £30
Pay What You Can Tuesdays: limited allocation in person from 6pm
ch: Whiteman. Mats Wed, Sat & Sun
Limited season until May 11

Mamma Mia!

www.mamma-mia.com
NOVELLO THEATRE, London WC2
Tel: 0844 482 5115, Prices: £20 - £95
ch: Van Laast. Mats Thur & Sat

Matilda The Musical

www.matildathemusical.com
CAMBRIDGE THEATRE, London WC2
Tel: 0844 412 4652, Prices: £20 - £62.50
ch: Darling. Mats Wed, Sat & Sun

Les Misérables

www.lesmis.com
QUEENS THEATRE, London W1
Tel: 0870 890 1110, Prices: £15 - £55
Mats Wed & Sat

Motown The Musical

www.motownthemusical.co.uk
SHAFTESBURY THEATRE, London WC2
Tel: 020 7379 5399, Prices: £25 - £145
ch: Wilcox. Mats Thu & Sat
Booking to Apr 20

The Phantom of the Opera

www.thephantomoftheopera.com
HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE, London SW1
Tel: 0870 890 1106, Prices: £20 - £55
ch: Lynne. Mats Tue & Sat

Rip It Up

www.riptituptheshow.com
GARRICK THEATRE, London WC2H
Tel: 0330 333 4811,
Prices: £25 - £85
Mats Tue & Sat

School of Rock

www.uk.schooloffrockthemusical.com
GILLIAN LYNNE THEATRE, London WC2
Tel: 020 7087 7750, Prices: £15 - £150
ch: Hunter. Mats Thu, Sat & Sun

Sweet Charity

www.donmarwarehouse.com
DONMAR WAREHOUSE, London WC2H
Tel: 020 3282 3808, Prices: £10 - £55
ch: McGregor. Mats Wed & Sat

Thriller Live

www.thrilleralive.co.uk
LYRIC THEATRE, London W1

Tel: 0844 482 9674, Prices: £26 - £58
ch: Lloyd. Mats Sat & Sun

Tina: The Musical

www.tinathemusical.com
ALDWYCH THEATRE, London WC2
Tel: 0845 200 7981, Prices: £10 - £129
ch: Van Laast. Mats Thu & Sat

Waitress

www.waitressthemusical.co.uk
ADELPHI THEATRE, London WC2R
Tel: 020 7087 7754,
Prices: £29.50 - £135
ch: Brock. Mats Wed & Sat

Wicked

www.wickedthemusical.co.uk
APOLLO VICTORIA THEATRE, London SW1
Tel: 0870 400 0889, Prices: £45 - £55
Mats Wed & Sat

OVERSEAS

Resident/Guest performances are listed alphabetically by country, then by company name.

ARGENTINA

Ballet Estable del Teatro Colón
www.teatrocylan.org.ar/en
BUENOS AIRES, Teatro Colón
APRIL
3-7,9-14: *Don Quixote* (prod Vasiliev)

AUSTRALIA

The Australian Ballet
www.australianballet.com.au
SYDNEY, Opera House
APRIL
5-25: *Constant Variants* (ch: Baynes), *Aurum* (ch: Topp), *Filigree and Shadow* (ch: Harbour)

Queensland Ballet

www.queenslandballet.com.au
BRISBANE, Queensland Performing Arts Centre
APRIL

Until Apr 6: *Dangerous Liaisons* (ch: Scarlett)

AUSTRIA

Vienna State Ballet
www.volksoper.at
www.wiener-staatsoper.at
VIENNA, Volksoper (VO) and Staatsoper (SO)
APRIL

4,9,12,15: *Romeo and Juliet* (ch: Bombana) (VO)
14,17,20,27,30: *Artifact Suite* (ch: Forsythe), *Trois Gnossiennes* (ch: Van Manen), *Solo* (ch: Van Manen), *Symphony of Psalms* (ch: Kylian) (SO)

BELGIUM

Dance at La Monnaie/ De Munt
www.lamonnaie.be or www.demunt.be
BRUSSELS, La Monnaie/De Munt
APRIL
2-3: *Damien Jalet and Kohei Nawa in Vessel* (ch: Jalet)

Royal Ballet Flanders
www.balletvlaanderen.be

Calendar

GHENT, Flanders Opera APRIL 12-14,17-18: B R I S A, JOY	TOULOUSE, Théâtre du Capitole APRIL 24-26,27M&E,28M: Beauty and the Beats (ch: Belarbi)	Bavarian State Ballet www.staatsballett.de MUNICH, Nationaltheater APRIL 1,15: Spartacus (ch: Grigorovich) 3,11,21: Jewels (ch: Balanchine) 7M,14M: Heinz-Bosl-Stiftung 8,12: Lady of the Camellias (ch: Neumeier) 13: Onegin (ch: Cranko) 14E: The Taming of the Shrew (ch: Cranko) 16: Kairos, Sunyata, Borderlands (all ch: McGregor) 17: Alice's Adventures in Wonderland (ch: Wheeldon) 18: Anna Karenina (ch: Spuck)	APRIL 5-14: ROME, Teatro India Tour of Upper East Side (ch: Di Stefano), Rain Dogs (ch: Inger) APRIL 8: MERANO, Teatro Puccini 9: BRESSANONE, Forum 10: VIPITENO, Teatro Comunale 11: BRUNICO, Haus Michael Pacher
Danse Danse www.dansedanse.ca MONTRÉAL, Théâtre Maisonneuve, Place des Arts APRIL 3-6: Kidd Pivot in Revisor (ch: Pite, Young) 30-May 4: Alonzo King Lines Ballet in The Propelled Heart (ch: King)	Ballet Nice Méditerranée www.opera-nice.org NICE, Opéra Nice Côte d'Azur APRIL 12-14,19-21: Three Preludes (ch: Stevenson), L'Arlesienne (ch: Petit), 5 Tangos (ch: Van Manen)	Le Centquatre-Paris www.104.fr PARIS, Le Centquatre-Paris APRIL 4-6: Christian and François Ben Aim in Arise (ch: Ben Aim) 5-6: Théo Mercier and Steven Michel in Affordable Solution for Better Living (ch: Michel) 5-6: Mathieu Desseigne-Ravel in Des gens qui dansent (petite histoire des quantités négligeables) (ch: Desseigne-Ravel) 6: Alban Richard in Fix Me (ch: Richard)	Ballet of Teatro alla Scala www.teatroallascala.org MILAN, Teatro alla Scala APRIL 7,10M&E,12-14,20: Woolf Works (ch: McGregor)
Le Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal www.grandsballets.com MONTRÉAL, Place des Arts APRIL 11-13: Giselle (prod: Cavallari)	CUBA National Ballet of Cuba www.balletcuba.cult.cu HAVANA, Gran Teatro APRIL 26-28: Mixed Bill	Le Centquatre-Paris www.104.fr PARIS, Le Centquatre-Paris APRIL 4-6: Christian and François Ben Aim in Arise (ch: Ben Aim) 5-6: Théo Mercier and Steven Michel in Affordable Solution for Better Living (ch: Michel) 5-6: Mathieu Desseigne-Ravel in Des gens qui dansent (petite histoire des quantités négligeables) (ch: Desseigne-Ravel) 6: Alban Richard in Fix Me (ch: Richard)	Ballet of Teatro San Carlo www.teatrosancarlo.it NAPLES, Teatro di San Carlo APRIL 2-3: Swan Lake (prod: Jude)
CZECH REPUBLIC Czech National Ballet www.narodni-divadlo.cz PRAGUE, National Theatre (N), New Stage (NS) APRIL 6,10: Swan Lake (prod: Cranko) (N) 18,21: Serenade (ch: Balanchine), Separate Knots (ch: Gat), Le Sacre du printemps (ch: Tetley) (N) 25: Rain (ch: Poklitaru), Vertigo (ch: Bigonzetti), Cacti (ch: Ekman) (NS)	DENMARK Royal Danish Ballet www.kglteater.dk COPENHAGEN, Royal Theatre Old Stage APRIL 2,5: Cinderella (ch: Dean) 4: Hüberter 13-14,16-17,26-27: AFTERITE (ch: McGregor), Etudes (ch: Lander) 26-28: Carrying a Dream (ch: Rushton)	Paris Opéra Ballet www.operadeparis.fr PARIS, Palais Garnier APRIL 1,3-4: Paris Opéra Ballet School in D'Orès et déja (ch: Massin, Paul), Conservatoire (ch: Bournonville), The Two Pigeons (ch: Aveline after Mérante) 18-19,20M&E,21M,26,27M&E: Sleight of Hand (ch: Léon, Lightfoot), Trois Gnossiennes (ch: Van Manen), Speak for Yourself (ch: Léon, Lightfoot)	Leipzig Ballet www.oper-leipzig.de LEIPZIG, Opera House APRIL 7,28: Prince, If You Were God (all ch: Harriague) 19: Bolero (Walking Mad) (ch: Inger), The Rite of Spring (ch: Schröder) 21: St John Passion (ch: Schröder)
FINLAND Finnish National Ballet www.opera.fi HELSINKI, Opera House APRIL 3,5-6,11,13M&E: Anna Karenina (ch: Ratmansky)	Théâtre des Champs-Élysées www.theatrechampselysees.fr PARIS, Théâtre des Champs-Élysées APRIL 9-11: Boston Ballet in Wings of Wax (ch: Kylian), Pas/Parts 2018 (ch: Forsythe), new Forsythe work 29-May 4: Sankai Juku in new Amagatsu work	GERMANY Aalto Ballet www.theater-essen.de ESSEN, Aalto Theater APRIL 12: Onegin (ch: Cranko) 14: Rock Around Baroque (ch: Van Cauwenburgh)	Staatsballett Berlin www.staatsballett-berlin.de BERLIN, Deutsche Oper (DO), Komische Oper (KO), Staatsoper (SO) APRIL 1,11,14: new Van Dijk work, Half life (ch: Eyal) (KO) 4,22M,26: La Sylphide, Napoli Act III (all ch: Bournonville) (DO) 5-6: Onegin (ch: Cranko) (SO) 7: Staatliche Ballettschule Berlin (SO)
FRANCE Ballet de l'Opéra National de Bordeaux www.opera-bordeaux.com BORDEAUX, Opéra National de Bordeaux APRIL 19-20: Malandain Ballet Biarritz	Badisches Staatstheater www.staatstheater.karlsruhe.de KARSLRUHE, Main Stage APRIL 6M: A Midsummer Night's Dream (ch: Vámos) 13,27: New Bordin work	Ballett Am Rhein www.ballettamrhein.de DÜSSELDORF, Opernhaus Düsseldorf APRIL 12,14,16,22,26,30: Dances With Piano (ch: Van Manen), Atmosphères (ch: Chaix), 44 Duos (ch: Schläpfer)	HOLLAND Dutch National Ballet www.het-nationale-ballet.nl AMSTERDAM, Het Muziektheater APRIL 2,4-5: Swan Lake (prod: Van Dantzig)
Ballet de l'Opéra National du Rhin www.operanationaldurhin.eu MULHOUSE, La Filature APRIL 26-28: Maria de Buenos Aires (ch: Tripodi)	Duisberg, Theater Duisberg APRIL 28: Symphony No 1 (ch: Šučeană), One Flat Thing Reproduced (ch: Forsythe), Ulenspiegeltänze (ch: Schläpfer)	ITALY Aterballetto www.aterballetto.it The company tours contemporary dance programmes around Italy. See website for booking details	APRIL 5-7,11-14,20-21: La Bayadère
Ballet du Capitole www.theatre-du-capitole.org	TOULOUSE, Théâtre du Capitole APRIL 24-26,27M&E,28M: Beauty and the Beats (ch: Belarbi)	HUNGARY Hungarian National Ballet www.opera.hu BUDAPEST, Erkel Theatre APRIL 14: Iván Nagy International Ballet Gala	PORTUGAL Centro Cultural de Belém www.ccb.pt

LISBON, Centro Cultural de Belém

APRIL

12-13: Companhia Shantala
Shivalingappa and Ferran
Savall in Impro Sharana

National Ballet of Portugal

www.cnb.pt

LISBON, Teatro Camões

APRIL

29: World Dance Day

RUSSIA

Bolshoi Ballet

www.bolshoi.ru

MOSCOW, Historic Stage (HS),
New Stage (NS),

APRIL

4-5,6M&E,7M: The Winter's
Tale (ch: Wheeldon) (HS)9-10: Swan Lake (prod:
Grigorovich) (HS)

12,13M&E,14M: Anna Karenina

(ch: Neumeier) (HS)

16-18: Romeo and Juliet

(ch: Ratmansky) (NS)

20M&E,21M: The Flames of Paris

(ch: Ratmasky after Vainonen) (NS)

23-25: La Sylphide (prod:

Kobborg) (NS)

27M&E,28M: The Cage (ch:

Robbins), Etudes (ch: Lander),

Carmen Suite (ch: Alonso) (NS)

Eifman Ballet

www.eifmanballet.com

ST PETERSBURG,

Alexandrinsky Theatre

APRIL

1-2: Anna Karenina (ch: Eifman)

Mikhailovsky Ballet

www.mikhailovsky.ru

ST PETERSBURG,

Mikhailovsky Theatre

APRIL

3: Don Quixote (prod:

Messerer) (Vasiliev)

4: Don Quixote

6M,7M&E: Le Corsaire

(prod: Ruzimatov)

6E: Le Corsaire (Vasiliev)

10-11: La Fille mal gardée (ch: Ashton)

13,14M&E: Cinderella (ch:

Messerer after Zakharov)

17: Multiplicity. Forms of Silence

and Emptiness (ch: Duato)

18-19,21M&E: The Sleeping

Beauty (ch: Duato)

24-25: Romeo and Juliet (ch: Duato)

27M&E: Na Floresta, Prelude,

White Darkness (all ch: Duato)

SOUTH AFRICA

Joburg Ballet

www.joburgballet.com

JOHANNESBURG, Joburg Theatre

APRIL

Until Apr 5: The Sleeping

Beauty (prod: Gielgud)

SPAIN

Ballet de Catalunya

www.catalunyaballet.com/en

APRIL

Triple bill of works by Remi

Wortmeyer, Katarzyna

Kozielska and Leo Sorribes

28: TERRASSA, Centre Cultural

Teatro Real

www.teatro-real.com

MADRID, Teatro Real

APRIL

Until Apr 4: Sasha Waltz and Guests
in Dido and Aeneas (ch: Waltz)

SWEDEN

Royal Swedish Ballet

www.operan.se

STOCKHOLM, Royal Opera House

APRIL

5,6M,9,11,13M,15,24,27M: An
Evening with Ekman (ch: Ekman)

SWITZERLAND

Zürich Ballet

www.zuercherballett.ch

ZÜRICH, Opera House

APRIL

3,6: Nijinsky (ch: Goecke)
11-12,14: Giselle (prod: Bart)

USA

American Ballet Theatre

www.abt.org

MINNEAPOLIS,

Northrup Memorial

Auditorium

APRIL

2: Mixed Bill TBA

IOWA CITY,

Iowa Hancher Auditorium

APRIL

6: Whipped Cream (ch: Ratmansky)

CHICAGO,

Auditorium Theatre

APRIL

11-14: Whipped Cream

Cal Performances

www.calperformances.org

BERKELEY, University of California

Zellerbach Hall

APRIL

9-14: Alvin Ailey American Dance
Theater (Programme TBA)

Charlotte Ballet

www.charlotteballet.org

CHARLOTTE, Knight Theater

APRIL

25-27: Opus 11 (ch: Dawson),
new Pickett work, Walking
Mad (ch: Inger)

Dance Salad Festival

www.dancesalad.org

HOUSTON, Wortham Center
and Museum of Fine Arts

APRIL

Festival of international dance, with
showcase performances from April
18-20, 2019, including appearances
by dancers of the Donlon Dance
Collective, New York City Ballet,
Royal Danish Ballet, Spellbound
Contemporary Ballet, Susanna
Leinonen Company, and special
guest stars Maria Kochetkova
and Sebastian Kloborg

Dance Theatre of Harlem

www.dancetheatreofharlem.org

NEW YORK, City Center

50th Anniversary Season

APRIL

10: Programme includes excerpts
from The Greatest (ch: Mitchell),
Return (Garland), Creole Giselle
(ch: Coralli, Perot), Agon (ch:
Balanchine), Forces of Rhythm (ch:
Johnson), Firebird (ch: Taras), Le
Corsaire (ch: Petipa), plus Bach
Passacaglia (ch: Mitchell) danced
by the Dance Theatre of Harlem

School and Dougla (ch: Holder)

12-13: Tones II (ch: Mitchell/
Garland), Nyman String Quartet
2 (ch: Garland), Balamouk
(ch: Lopez Ochoa), Dougla

Joffrey Ballet

www.joffrey.org

CHICAGO,
The Auditorium Theatre

APRIL

24-May 5: Kairos (ch: McGregor),
Symphonic Variations (ch:
Ashton), new Walker workJohn F Kennedy Center
for the Performing Arts

www.kennedy-center.org

WASHINGTON, DC,

2700 F Street NW

Washington, DC 20566

Opera House

APRIL

2-3,7: New York City Ballet
in Composer's Holiday (ch:
Reisen), Kammermusik No 2
(ch: Balanchine), Symphony in
C (ch: Balanchine), Opus 19/
The Dreamer (ch: Robbins)
4-5,6M&E: New York City Ballet
in new Peck work, Something
to Dance About (ch: Carlyle),
In the Night (ch: Robbins)
9-14: The Maryinsky Ballet
in Le Corsaire (ch: Petipa)

Joyce Theater

www.joyce.org

NEW YORK, 175 Eighth Avenue
at 19th Street, New York

APRIL

2-14: Martha Graham
Dance Company
17-21: Merce Cunningham
Centennial
24-27: American Ballet
Theatre Studio Company
29-May 1: Lucy Guerin Inc and
Dancenorth in Attractor

Juilliard School

www.juilliard.edu

NEW YORK, 155 West 65th St

APRIL

26-28: Senior Dance Production

Miami City Ballet

www.miamicityballet.org

MIAMI, Broward Center (BC),
Kravis Center (KC)

APRIL

5-7: A Midsummer Night's
Dream (ch: Balanchine) (KC)
13-14: A Midsummer
Night's Dream (BC)

The Music Center

www.musiccenter.org

LOS ANGELES,

California

APRIL

3-7: Alvin Ailey American
Dance Theater

New York City Ballet

www.nycballet.com

NEW YORK, David H Koch

Theater, Lincoln Center

APRIL

23,25-26,27E: Pictures at an
Exhibition (ch: Ratmansky),
Oltremare (ch: Bigonzetti), Rodeo:
Four Dance Episodes (ch: Peck)
24,27M,28M: new Neenan work,
Hallelujah Junction (ch: Martins),
Herman Schmerman (ch: Forsythe),
Concerto DSCH (ch: Ratmansky)30: Scotch Symphony, Le Tombeau
de Couperin, Sonatine, Stravinsky

Violin Concerto (all ch: Balanchine)

New York City Center

www.nycitycenter.org

NEW YORK, 131 W 55th St

APRIL

3-6: Natalia Osipova and David
Hallberg in Pure Dance - works by
Alexei Ratmansky, Iván Pérez, Yuuka
Oishi, Antony Tudor and Roy Assaf
10-13: Dance Theatre of Harlem

Oregon Ballet Theatre

www.obt.org

PORTLAND, Newmark Theatre

APRIL

11-14: Bringing Outside In (ch:
Barbuto), Presto (ch: Fonte),
Jardí Tançat (ch: Duato), Giants
Before Us (ch: Fonte)

Orlando Ballet

www.orlandoballet.org

ORLANDO, Dr Phillips Center
for the Performing Arts

APRIL

26-28: Arcadian Broad's
Wonderland: Mad Tales of
the Hatter (ch: Broad)

Pacific Northwest Ballet

www.pnb.org

SEATTLE, Marion

Oliver McCaw Hall

APRIL

12-21: A Midsummer Night's
Dream (ch: Balanchine)

Pennsylvania Ballet

www.paballet.org

PHILADELPHIA,

Merrimam Theater

APRIL

4-7: Apollo (ch: Balanchine),
The Cage (ch: Robbins), new
Neenan work, Stravinsky Violin
Concerto (ch: Balanchine)

San Francisco Ballet

www.sfballet.org

SAN FRANCISCO,

War Memorial Opera House

APRIL

2,5,7M: work TBA, work TBA,
new Possokhov work
3-4,6M&E,9: work TBA, new
Scarlett work, Rodeo: Four
Dance Episodes (ch: Peck)
19,20M&E,23-25,28M: The Little
Mermaid (ch: Neumeier)

Sarasota Ballet

www.sarasotaballet.org

SARASOTA, Opera House

APRIL

26-27: Giselle (prod: Wright)

The Washington Ballet

www.washingtonballet.org

WASHINGTON DC,

The Harman Center

APRIL

3-7: Three new works by Dana
Genshaft, Trey McIntyre
and Ethan Stiefel

URUGUAY

Ballet Nacional Sodre

www.bns.gub.uy

MONTEVIDEO, Auditorio
Nacional del Sodre

APRIL

Until Apr 3: Carmina
burana (ch: Wainrot)

Listings

Schools, classes & dances

Afro-Cuban
Argentine Tango
Ballet
B&L – Ballroom & Latin
Brazilian Samba
Contemporary
FLamenco
Folk
Hip Hop
Irish
Jazz
Musical Theatre
Other
Salsa
SEquence
South Asian
SWing
Tap



Dance schools and classes are listed by region. We have concentrated on schools offering ballroom/Latin or social dance forms. Please contact the school directly for more details, and contact us on editorial@dancing-times.co.uk if you would like your school to be included here. Whilst every care has been taken in compiling these listings, *Dancing Times* cannot accept responsibility for errors or omissions.

EASTERN ENGLAND

Cambridge

Joanna Navarre Dance: Cambridge, [t] 07964 586 120. **AT, B&L, SW**

Essex

Anthony Clifford Dance Studios: Romford, [t] 01708 783 576. **B&L, H, J, O**

Athene School of Dancing, The Dancentre: Chelmsford, [t] 01245 475 288. **AT, B&L, SE**
Billericay Dancing Club: Buttsbury Infant School, Billericay, [t] 01277 654 768. **AT, B&L, SE**
Chelmsford Dance Centre: Chelmsford, [t] 01245 473 355. **AT, B&L, H**

Diamante Dance Academy: Chelmsford, [t] 07505 003 078. **B&L**
Emma's Dance Academy: Ongar and Waltham Abbey, [t] 07956 116 827. **B&L**
Jenny's Jems: Warley, [t] 01268 762 626. **B&L, SE**
Julia Spencer School of Dancing: Clacton-on-Sea, [t] 07720 844 619. **B&L, H, SE**

Kings Palais of Dance: Grays, [t] 01375 375 810. **AT, B&L, H, O, S**
Phillips Dancing: Witham, [t] 01245 258 510. **B&L, O**

Simply-the-West: Brentwood, Chelmsford and Great Dunmow, [t] 01621 850 195. **B&L**

Southend Dance Centre: Southend, [t] 01268 743 116. **B&L, H, O**
Steps Ahead School of Dancing: Collier: Collier Row and Romford, [t] 07789 552 846. **B&L**

Time4Dance: North Weald, Blackmore

& Highwood

[t] 07872 427 946. **B&L**
United Dance Studios: Stanford Le Hope, [t] 01375 672 864. **B&L**

Norfolk

Ballroom and Latin Classes: Wymondham, [t] 01953 607 474. **B&L**
Hemsby Sequence Dance Club: Hemsby Village Hall, [t] 01603 270 709. **SE**
Larinda and Nigel Smith School of Dance: Great Yarmouth, [t] 01493 789 918. **B&L, SE**
Simply Dance: Spooner Row / Watton, [t] 01953 455 500. **AT, B&L, SE, SW**
Tempo School of Dancing: Great Yarmouth, [t] 01493 665 558. **B&L, SE**

Norwich

Miller Dance: Norwich, [t] 01603 488 249. **AT, B&L**
Old Time Dance: Norwich, [t] 01760 441 055.

Suffolk

Academy of Ballroom Dancing: Felixstowe / Newmarket, [t] 01394 282 285. **B&L, SE**
Ballroom Experience Co: Stowmarket / Bury St Edmunds / West Suffolk, [t] 0845 053 7475. **AC, AT, B&L, S**
Lait Dance Club: St Matthews Hall, Ipswich, [t] 01473 743 079. **AC, B&L, H, O, S**

EAST MIDLANDS

Derbyshire

Déda: Derby, [t] 01332 370 911.

AT, B, C, B&L, O, SW

Three Stars Dancing: Derby, [t] 07831 663 857. **AT, B&L, S**

Leicestershire

118 Dance Studio: Leicester, [t] 0116 251 7073 / 0116 289 2518. **B&L, H, O**
ABC Ballroom: Leicester, [t] 0116 253 0463. **AT, B&L, O, SE, SW**
Burbage Dance Studio: Hinckley, [t] 01455 616 146. **B&L, SW**

Lincolnshire

Ballroom Blitz, The Mitchell School of Dance: Barton-upon-Humber and Kirton-in-Lindsey, [t] 01652 649 164. **B&L, O, SW, S**
Clarke's Dance Studio: Boston and Spalding, [t] 01775 840 049. **B&L, SE, SW**
Cliftons Dance Academy: Grimsby, New Waltham, Cleethorpes, Old Clee, Stallingborough and Immingham, [t] 01472 822 270. **B&L, H, O, SE, SW**
Go Dance Studios: Lincoln and Sleaford, [t] 01529 300 930. **B, B&L, H, J, MT, O, T**
Karen Chevalier School of Dance: Grantham, [t] 01476 578 999. **AT, B&L, SE**
The Lincoln Dancentre: Lincoln, [t] 01522 688 676. **B&L, O, SE**
Mayfair School of Dancing: Grimsby, [t] 01472 870 704. **AT, B&L, H, O, S**
Premiere Dance Centre: Lincoln, [t] 01522 510 080. **B&L, H, O, SE**

Nottinghamshire

Ann Culley School of Dance: Papplewick, Nottinghamshire, [t] 0115 963 3428. **B&L, SA, SE, O, H, SW**
Expressions, Mansfield, [t] 01623 647 337. **B, B&L, H, J, MT, S**
Regency Dance Centre: Sutton-in-Ashfield, Nottingham, [t] 01623 552 737. **B&L, B, S, SE**

THE NORTH/NORTH EAST

Yorkshire

Butterfly Dance Studios: Goole, [t] 01405 780 626. **B, B&L, H, MT, T**
City-Limits Dancentre: Sheffield, [t] 0114 234 4866. **AT, B, B&L, H, MT, S, SW, T**
Drapers Dance Centre: Sheffield, [t] 0114 269 5703. **B&L, S, SW, O**
Finders Dance Studio: Huddersfield, [t] 01484 607 158. **B, SE, SW**
The Hatton Academy of Dance and Arts: South Shields, [t] 0191 454 2889. **B&L, S, SE, O**
Helen Neill School of Dance: Penistone, Sheffield, [t] 01226 763 322. **B&L, BS, SA, SE, SW**
Hype Dance Company: Sheffield, [t] 0114 2470 6757. **B, C, H, J, T**
Jo's Dance Centre: Todmorden, [t] 01706 815 260. **B&L, BS, H, J, O, S, SE, SW**
Julie Roper School of Dancing: Hull, [t] 01482 572 883. **B&L, SE**
Lacey School of Dancing: Brough, [t] 01482 666 863. **B&L, O, SE, SW**
Laura Martin Dance: Yorkshire and Humber, [t] 07835 037 253. **B&L, O**
Laws Page Dance Centre: Whitby,

[t] 01947 604 516. **B&L, O, S, SE, SW**

Rhythm and Dreams Dancing Centre: The First Floor, 833-839 Hesse High Road, Hull, [t] 01482 448 347. **B&L, BS, O, S, SW**

Shandaw School of Dance: Leeds / Bradford, [t] 01132 390 391. **B&L, H, O, S, SE, SW**
Smith and Jaques Dance Club: Billingham, [t] 01642 560 068. **B&L, O**
Yorkshire Rose Academy of Dance: York, [t] 07891 004 850. **B, C, H, J, MT, O, T**

NORTH WEST

Cheshire

Bruce's School of Dance: Chester, [t] 01244 881 316. **B&L, SW**
Charlesway School of Dance: Deeside, [t] 01244 520 534. **B&L, SE**
DanceBasics: nr Crewe, [t] 01270 669 084. **B&L, H, S, SE, SW**
Dance Fever: Wilmslow, [t] 07973 921 714. **B&L, H, S, O**
DanceWorks: Altrincham, [t] 0161 291 1295. **H, J, O**
Glenda Harding Theatre School: Macclesfield, [t] 01625 263 055. **MT, O**
Hartland School of Dance: Cheshire, [t] 07712 069 627. **B&L, O, SE**
Ian Rowe: Crewe, [t] 01270 253 121. **B&L, BS, O, S, SE**
JanNik Dance: Altrincham, [t] 07896 230 945. **O**
Northwich Dance Company: Northwich, [t] 01606 49050. **F, H, O, S**
Pyramid and Parr Hall: Warrington, [t] 01925 442 345. **B&L, FL, H, O, S**
Stockport Dance Centre: Stockport, [t] 0161 429 9507. **B&L, F, O, S, SW**
Whitby Sports and Social Club: Ellesmere Port, [t] 0151 355 4661. **B&L**
Willsher School of Dancing: Ellesmere Port, [t] 0151 339 4362. **B&L, S**

Cumbria

Wilde Dance School: Kirkby Lonsdale / Kendal, [t] 01524 276 455. **B&L, SE, SW**

Isle of Man

Killey Academy of Dancing: Onchan, [t] 01624 623 414. **B&L, SE**

Lancashire

JLC Dance Ltd: Blackpool, [t] 01253 693 350. **AT, B&L, O, S, SE, SW**
Dancers Studio: Preston, [t] 01772 254 161 / 07970 752 341. **B&L, F, H, J, O, S, SE, SW**
Danceworks: Clitheroe, [t] 01200 443 791. **B&L, O, S**
DAPA Centre: Blackburn, [t] 01254 699 221. **F, H, J, L, O, S**
Dawn Chapman School of Dance: Todmorden, [t] 01706 839 113. **B&L, BS, H, J, O, S, SE, SW**
Fever Dance Studio: Preston, [t] 01772 703 704. **B&L, BS, F, H, J, O, S, SE, SW**
Helen Green Academy of Dance: Trawden, [t] 07967 831 661. **H, L, O**
Judy Clegg Dancentre: Rossendale, [t] 01706 227 564. **B&L, H, J, S, SE, SW**
Morecambe Bay Ballroom and Latin Dance Group: Sedbergh, [t] 01539 620 536. **B&L, SE, SW**
Reeders Dance Studio: Preston, [t] 01772 704 651. **B&L, H, O, S, SE**

SW Rossendale Dance and Drama Centre: Rossendale, [t] 01706 211 161. **B&L, F, H, I, J, S, SE, SW**
Sanderson Dance and Fitness: Nelson, [t] 01282 617 722. **B&L, H, J, O, S, SE, SW**

Merseyside
The Bullen School of Dancing: Southport, [t] 01704 544 675. **B&L, S, SE, O**
June Hopfield School of Dancing: Thorton, [t] 0151 476 0109/07789 855 408. **B, O**
The Hipshaw School of Dance: Formby, [t] 01704 576 137. **B&L, S, SE, O**
M S Dance: Wallasey, [t] 0151 639 9901. **B&L, SE**
Martin's Dance Centre: Liverpool, [t] 0151 228 4586. **B&L, O, S, SE, SW**
Merrall's Academy: Gayton, [t] 0151 342 7462. **B&L, O, S, SW**
Margaret Redmond: Crosby, [t] 0776 811 3078. **B&L, SE**
Wirral Dance Club: Bromborough, [t] 0151 339 7116. **B&L**

Greater Manchester
Atherton Dance Centre: Atherton, [t] 01942 888 711. **B&L, H, O, S**
Lorraine C Eckersley Dance School: Prestwich/Whitefield, [t] 01706 872 556. **B&L, O, S, SE**
PB Dance Studio: Davyhulme, [t] 0161 746 7786. **B&L, F, O, S, SE, SW**
Sandham's Dance Studio: Bolton, [t] 01204 795 130. **B&L, H, J, O, S**
Steppin' Out Dance Centre: Stretford, [t] 0161 865 1443. **B&L, O, S**

SCOTLAND

Aberdeen

2 Left Feet Dance School: Stonehaven, [t] 01569 764 130. **B,&L, F, SE**
Hay Memorial Hall: Banff, [t] 01466 751 273. **SE**
Irene Taylor Dance School: Portlethen, [t] 01224 780 186. **F**

Edinburgh

Woolmet Dance Studio: Edinburgh, [t] 0131 258 1251/ 07810 545 839. **H, J, L, O, S, SW**

Glasgow

Dance Factory Dance Studios: Glasgow, [t] 0141 423 9430. **FL, J, H, O**
The Dance House: Maryhill Community Education Centre, [t] 0141 332 1490. **FL, H, L, O, SW**

Moray

Caroline Coomer Dance: Elgin, [t] 01343 541 983. **B&L**

SOUTH EAST

Bedfordshire/ Buckinghamshire

Adrian Marsh School of Dance: Various locations in Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire, [t] 01908 393 315. **B&L, O, SW**
Castle Street Dance Studios: High Wycombe, Bucks, [t] 07594 475 277. **B&L, H, O**
Dallas Dance Club: Luton, [t] 01296 482 280. **B&L, H, O, S, SE, SW**
Dancesport Academy: Various locations in Bedfordshire, [t] 0845 388 9307. **B&L**
GB Dance: Aylesbury, [t] 07582 551 178. **B&L, SE, SW**
Katsteps Ballroom Dancing: Chesham, Bucks,

[t] 01494 580 327. **B&L**
Strictly Salsa: Around Bucks, [t] 07984 149 971. **S**

Berkshire

Barbara and David Stewart: Maidenhead, [t] 01628 629 563. **B&L, SE**
Eva's Dancing Studio: Slough, [t] 01753 647 230. **B&L, O, SW**
Haymill Centre: Slough, [t] 01753 544 323. **B&L, SE**
LearnToDance: Burnham Park Hall, Windsor Lane, Burnham [t] 01753 360 121. **B&L, SE, S, SW**
Line and Latin American Dance: Wexham Court Primary School, Slough, [t] 01753 595 781. **B&L, O**
Lynn's School of Dancing: Burnham, [t] 01628 661 472. **B&L, O, SW**
Raymond Miles School of Dancing: Reading, [t] 0118 947 8874. **B&L, O, S, SE**

East Sussex

Brighton Jive Promotions: Brighton, [t] 01273 560 480. **SW**
Hampden Park Old Time Dance Club: Summerheath Hall, Hailsham, [t] 01323 847 506. **SE**
Modern Sequence Dancing: Rox School of Dance: Brighton, [t] 01273 772 462. **B&L, S, SW**
Star Dance School: East Sussex [t] 01273 719 500. **B&L**

Central and Greater London

ACW Dance Studio: Wimbledon, [t] 020 8871 0890. **B&L, S, SE, SW**
Age Concern Beginners Samba: Peel Centre, Percy Circus, WC1, [t] 020 7439 3405. **BS**

Alpha Dancing Club: Eltham, London, [t] 07850 178 869. **B&L**
Ann Langley School of Dancing: Shepperton, [t] 020 8751 2177. **B&L, O, S, SE, SW**

The Basement: Kentish Town, [t] 020 7700 7722. **H, J, O, S**
Central London Dance Vernon Kemp: London W1, [t] 020 7224 6004. **B&L, S, SE, SW**

Ceroc Dance: Brent Town Hall, Wembley, [t] 020 8937 6204. **O**
Curry's Dance Music: Fulham Town Hall, SW6, [t] 01895 633 960. **B&L, SE**
Dance Addiction: Enfield Highway Community Centre, Enfield EN3, [t] 020 8363 3636. **B&L, F**

Dance Attic Studios: Fulham, [t] 020 7610 2055. **B&L, FL, H, O, S, SW**
Dance Wise: New Eltham, [t] 020 8294 1576. **B&L, H, J, O, S, SW**

Danceworks: Mayfair, [t] 020 7629 6183. **B&L, BS, FL, H, O, S**
Dancing Club LA: Barnet, [t] 020 8207 2323. **B&L, S**

Daphne Harris School of Dancing: Kentish Town, [t] 020 7439 3405. **B&L, SE**
East London Dance: Stratford, [t] 020 8279 1050. **H, O, S**

Expressions Studios: Kentish Town, [t] 020 7813 1580. **AT, H, S, O**
The Factory: Hornsey, [t] 020 7272 1122. **B&L, H, J, O, S**

Fairhall Dancing: Catford, [t] 020 8699 5262. **B&L, O, SE**
Firefly Blues Dance Club: City Firefly Bar EC4, [t] 01895 613 703. **O, SW**

Greenwich Dance Agency: London, [t] 020 8293 9741. **S, O**
Hill Dance Academy: Hackney and Streatham, [t] 0777 2199 103. **B&L, BS, O, SW**

Hutson School of Dancing: [t] 01494 580 327. **B&L**
Strictly Salsa: Around Bucks, [t] 07984 149 971. **S**

South Woodford, [t] 020 8590 3442. **B&L, SW**
Independent Dance School: London W1, [t] 07451 532 5420. **B&L, BS, O, S, SE, SW**

Inspiration 2 Dance: Kensington and Holland Park, [t] 07711 652 875. **B&L, S, O**
JB's Dance Studio: London E12, [t] 020 8478 6055. **B&L, F, H, O, S, SE, SW**
J&B Dance: N3, [t] 020 8444 0280. **B&L**
Jive Salsa: London W9, [t] 07956 392 555. **B&L, O, SW**
Karen Hardy Studios: Imperial Wharf, London, SW6, [t] 0871 218 2341. **B&L, O**
Kensington Dance Studio: London W14, [t] 020 7823 9949. **B&L, O, S, SW**
London Swing Dance Society: London WC1, [t] 01895 613 703. **SW, O**

Michael's Dance Studio: Chingford, [t] 020 8529 8396. **B&L, O, S, SE, SW**
Modern Jive: 400 venues across the UK, [w] www.modernjive.com for details. **J1**
Morley College: London SE1, [t] 020 7450 1832. **B&L, F, FL, H, J, O, S, SW**
Oak Hall: Southbourne Gardens, Eastcote, HA4, [t] 020 8954 3363. **SE**
Old Time: Leighton Crescent, Kentish Town, [t] 020 7439 3405. **SE**
Paul Killick's Dancesport: London SW1, [t] 020 7589 3071. **B&L, O, S, SW**
Penge Lindy Hop Club: London SE2, [t] 01895 613 703. **O, SW**
POSK: Hammersmith, [t] 01895 422 776. **B&L**
Practice Makes Perfect Dance Workshops: Thursdays, Belmont

WC1 [t] 020 7720 7608. **Corrientes Tango Club: WC1, [t] 020 7738 4404.**
El Once Club de Tango: The Crypt, EC1, [t] 020 7582 0910. **La Practica: Museum Wine Bar, WC1, [t] 020 7613 0422.**
Las Estrellas: London W2, [t] 020 7221 5038. **Learning Tango: St Paul's Church Hall, London NW7, [t] 07767 784 238.**
West Wimbledon Tango: West Wimbledon Society Hall, Wimbledon, [t] 07506 259 769. **Milonga: The Lecture Hall, Wimbledon Village, [t] 020 8672 3944.**

and the Black-E, Liverpool
Details: Mersey Swing hosts its first weekend swing festival.
Tickets: Single pass from £139 www.lindyinthesky.co.uk

May 24–27

London Swing Festival
Venue: Limehouse Town Hall and Poplar Union

Details: London Swing Festival is back after a two-year hiatus for an incredible weekend of music and dancing.

Tickets: Full weekend pass from £160 (in advance) www.londonswingfestival.co.uk

May 31 – June 2

Brum Swing Exchange

Venue: Various, Birmingham

Details: Partyng, dancing, live music and all the best the Birmingham swing scene has to offer.

Tickets: Advance tickets from £50 www.brumswing.co.uk

JUNE

June 1

Westlands Big Band Ball

Venue: Westlands Ballroom, Yeovil

Details: Swing along to the Piccadilly Dance Orchestra as it plays 1920s and 1930s Jazz Age hits.

Tickets: £22

www.westlandsyeovil.co.uk



APRIL

April 14

Journey Through Jazz

Venue: Underbelly Festival on London's South Bank

Details: Simon Selmon and Anna Lambrechts will lead you on a journey through the cake walk, Charleston, Lindy hop and twist.

Tickets: From £11.50

www.swingdanceuk.com

April 19–22

Brighton Lindy Hop Festival

Venue: The Marina Studios and Unitarian Church, Brighton

Details: Join in with classes, socials and the Brighton Lindy Hop Competition for amateurs.

Tickets: From £85 for earlybirds

www.brightonlindyhopfestival.com

April 26

Swing into Spring

Venue: Shoreditch Town Hall

Details: Don your sharpest threads and head to Shoreditch, London, for classes and more.

Tickets: From £11 (in advance)

www.swingdanceuk.com

MAY

May 10–12

Lindy in the Sky with Diamonds

Venue: Liverpool University

Listings

Tango Argentino: St. Mary's Parish Hall, Finchley, [t] 020 8346 4024.
 Tango in the City: The Union Tavern, WC1, [t] 020 8520 2726.
 Tango Federico: Chiswick Town Hall, [t] 020 8291 4977.
 Tango London: The Factory, N19, [t] 020 7272 1122.
 Total Tango: Museum Wine Bar, WCI, [t] 020 7837 9720.
 Zero Hour: Boston Arms Pub, N19, [t] 020 7263 0665.

Hampshire

Argentine Tango: Archers Road Social Club, Southampton, [t] 07889 288 368. **T**
 DM Dance Centre (Diment Macdonald): Southampton, [t] 023 8055 4192. **B&L, H, O, S, SE, SW**
 Dance Connection of Gosport: Gosport, [t] 01329 314 061 / 07986 687 463. **B&L, O, S, SE, SW**
 Dance Factory: Aldershot, [t] 01252 338 199. **B&L, O, S, SW**
 David Smith Dance: Basingstoke, [t] 07791 749 163 **B&L, BS, O, S, SE, SW**
 Fiesta Dance School: Basingstoke, [t] 01983 721 654. **B&L, H, O, SW**
 La Rueda: Hedge End, Southampton, [t] 07889 288 368. **S**
 Luci's Dance Studio: Totton, [t] 023 8087 1921. **B&L, FL, O, S**
 Povey Ronald: Southampton, [t] 023 8022 4163. **B&L, S, SW**
 Sally Adams Danceworks:

Ringwood, [t] 01425 474 072 / 07790 228 502. **B&L, H, O, S, SW**
 Tango's Dance Club: Lee-on-the-Solent, [t] 023 9255 3201. **B&L**
 Tony School of Dancing: Lymington, [t] 01590 674 211. **B&L, O, SW**
 Tracie's Latin Club: Southampton, [t] 07889 288 368. **AT, S, SW**
 Victory School of Dance: Portsmouth, [t] 023 9235 8235 / 07986 895 583. **B&L, O, S, SE**

Hertfordshire

Alter Ego Dance Studio: Welwyn Garden City, [t] 01707 550 200. **H**
 Apton Dance Studio: Bishop's Stortford, [t] 01279 465 381. **B&L, O, SW**
 Barbara's Ballroom and Latin Dance Classes: Hemel Hempstead, [t] 01442 384 535 / 07930 992 368. **B&L**
 Bojangles Modern Jive: Welwyn Garden City, [t] 01438 718 906. **SW**
 Culture Dance Club: Hatfield, [t] 01707 887 128. **B&L, SE**
 De Havilland Ballroom and Latin American Group: Hatfield, [t] 01707 262 750. **B&L**
 De Havilland Sports and Social Club: Hatfield, [t] 01707 262 665. **SW, SE**
 Doric Dance Centre: Cheshunt, [t] 01992 624 228. **B&L, S, SE, SW**
 GB Dance: Berkhamsted, [t] 07582 551 178. **B&L, SE, SW**
 "Hiel" and Toe Scottish Country and Highland Dance Club: Harpenden, [t] 01582 769 607. **F, O**

JiveSwing.Com: Classes in Welwyn, Brentwood, Watford, Hertford, Hatfield, Chelmsford, St Albans, Letchworth and Southend [t] 07946 396 777. **SW**
 Learning Tango: Berkhamsted, [t] 07767 784 238. **AT**
 Melody School of Dancing: Welwyn Garden City, [t] 01707 891 350. **B&L**
 The Two Roberts: Borehamwood and Watford, [t] 01923 221 185. **B&L, SE**

Isle of Wight

Pegasus: Newport, [t] 01983 861 488 / 07817 087 914.
AT, B&L, H, O, S, SW

Kent

Beginners' Salsa Class: Beckenham, [t] 01689 856 763 / 020 8302 4111. **S**
 Dance Expressions: Orpington, [t] 01689 833 156. **B&L, H, O**
 Dancing Feet Dance Centre: Rochester, [t] 01634 714 147. **AT, B&L, H, S, SW**
 GDC School of Dancing: Lenham, [t] 01622 850 800. **B&L, O**
 Goodman Dance Centre: Dartford, [t] 01322 222 508. **B&L**
 Grover Dance Centre: Azelia Hall, Beckenham, [t] 01689 856 763 / 020 8302 4111. **B&L**
 Hotsteps School of Dance: Orpington, [t] 01689 822 702. **B&L, O**

International Dance Studios:

Tunbridge Wells, [t] 01892 458 025. **AT, B&L, O**
 JB's Dance Studio: Folkestone, [t] 01303 252 706. **AT, B&L, FL, J, O, S, SE**

JJ Dance Studios: Beckenham,

[t] 07979 752 215. **AT, B&L, H, O, S**

Medway School of Dancing:

Tonbridge, [t] 01732 358 355.

AT, B&L, H, S, SE, SW

Miss Sylvia Walker: Hayes,

[t] 01293 776 668. **B&L, SE**

Que Pasa (Bar Cafe Ole): Tunbridge Wells and various surrounding

locations, [t] 01322 385 795. **S**

Salsa in Bromley: The Civic Centre,

Bromley, [t] 07958 519 595. **S**

Shirley Cox School of Dancing: Biggin Hill,

[t] 01959 700 654.

AT, B&L, H, J, O, S

Social Dance: The Grand

Burstin Hotel, Folkestone,

[t] 01233 712 323. **O, S**

Star Dance Club: Gillingham,

[t] 07733 262 387. **AT, B&L, O, S, SE, SW**

Warmlake Dance Academy:

Maidstone, [t] 01622 840 054.

B&L, H, O

Oxfordshire

Dance Rhythms: Cowley, [t] 01865

875 800. **AT, B&L, H, O, S, SE, SW**

Surrey

Barbara Srour School of Dance:

Camberley, [t] 01276 685 699.

AT, B&L, O, S, SE, SW

Dance Club: Chertsey,

[t] 01483 473 363. **B&L**

Dance Options: Cheam,

[t] 07732 983 069. **B&L, O**

Foskett School of Dancing: Dorking,

[t] 01306 883 808. **AT, B&L, H, S, SW**

Kingston Dance: Kingston Dance

Studio, [t] 020 8394 1610. **AT**

LeRoc Surrey Modern Jive:

Dorking, [t] 01883 740 559 / 07944

971 195. **AT, B&L, BS, O, S, SW**

Rob and Wendy's Dance Club:

Cheam, [t] 020 8287 0518. **AT, B&L, O**

Swingin' at Salfords: Redhill,

[t] 01895 613 703. **O, SW**

Time to Dance: Caterham, [t] 07967 440 587. **AT, B&L, O, SE, SW**

West Sussex

Crawley Dance Academy: Crawley, [t] 01293 612 538. **B&L**
 Elite Stage and Dance School: Crawley, [t] 01293 565 264. **AT, B&L, H, J, SW**
 Keenes Dance Studio: Worthing, [t] 01903 213 740. **AT, B&L, F, O, S, SE, Partners Dancing: east and Wes, [t] 01903 203 192. **S****

Star Dance School: West Sussex, [t] 01273 719 500. **B&L**

SOUTH WEST

Avon

Avon Dancers' Club: Somerset Hall, The Precinct, Portishead, [t] 0117 971 0871. **AT, B&L, SE**

Cornwall

Blue Lagoon Dance Club: Newquay, [t] 01637 873 789. **B&L, O**
 idodance: Truro, [t] 01209 861 327. **AT, B&L, O, SE, SW**

Kernow Dance Centre: St Columb, [t] 01726 860 387. **AT, B&L, O, S, SE, SW**

Devon

Ballroom with Dancing Duo: Stowford Centre, Sidmouth, [t] 01803 325 905. **B&L, SE**

Ballroom with Dancing Duo: Livermead House Hotel, Torquay, [t] 01803 325 905. **B&L, SE**

Ballroom with Dancing Duo:

Plymouth City College, [t] 01803 325 905. **B&L, SE**

Club Rainbow: Torquay, [t] 01803 613 580. **O, SW**

Dance Matrix: Harewood House, Plympton, [t] 01752 898 604. **B&L**

Danceworks Devon:

Newton Abbot, [t] 01626 365 112. **B&L, H, O, S, SE**

Lansdowne Dance Centre: Torquay, [t] 01803 613 580. **B&L, S**

The Music Mill: Newton Abbot, [t] 01626 361 999. **H, J, O**

Plymouth Dance Academy: Various locations in the Plymouth area, [t] 01752 766 785. **AT, B&L, BS, J, O**

ProjectDance: Devon area, [t] 07795 201 249. **B&L, H, O, S**

Puttin' on The Ritz: Various locations in the Plymouth area, [t] 01752 335 030. **AT, B&L, H, O, SE, SW**

Dorset

Anglo Dance Studios: Bournemouth, [t] 01202 514 551.

AT, B&L, F, J, O, S, SW

Dance Crazy: Bournemouth, [t] 01202 527 403. **AT, B&L, H, O, S, SW**

Dance Majic: Poole, [t] 01202 668 722. **B&L, F, O, S, SW**

Nice 'n' Easy Dance Studio: Bournemouth, [t] 01202

394 017. **B&L, O, S**

Salsa Caliente: Weymouth, [t] 01305 816 202. **AT, S, O**

Gloucestershire

Dance at 8: Bredon Village Hall, Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire, [t] 01386 556 665. **AT, B&L, BS, O, S, W**
 Finesteps: Cheltenham, [t] 07852 960 974. **AT, B&L, O, S, SE**
 Hilary Saxby School of Dancing: Cheltenham, [t] 01242 820 200. **AT, B&L, H, O, S, SE**



APRIL

April 19–21

Lyon Bachata Festival
Venue: Espace Ecilly, Lyon
Details: The fifth edition of the festival includes the Bachata Open.
Tickets: From €89.90 for early birds www.lyonbachatafestival.com

April 19–22

Eastonathon
Venue: Old Windsor Memorial Hall, Berks
Details: Tango through Easter weekend.
Tickets: £10 per milonga www.thamesvalleytango.co.uk

MAY

May 3–5

Cuban Salsa Sensation Weekend
Venue: York House Hotel, Eastbourne
Details: Over an intensive weekend, hosts Cuban-born instructor Leo Henriquez, Katarína Krošláková and salsa musicality expert Lee Knights will help you to take your dancing to another level.
Tickets: From £249 www.clubdanceholidays.co.uk

May 10–13

Salsa Northwest UK Congress
Venue: The Blackpool Hotel
Details: Back for the fourth year, the congress offers workshops and party nights.
Tickets: Full pass from £75 www.salsanorthwest.co.uk

01242 251 206. **B, J, MT, T**
Packard Dance Centre: Yate,
[t] 01454 273 067. **B&L, H, O, S, SE**

Somerset

Bath Uni Ballroom and Latin Club,
[e] bds-committee@bath.ac.uk. **B&L, SW**
Bredon Village Hall: Tewkesbury,
[t] 01386 556 665. Beginners **B&L**
Burroughs School of Dancing:
Weston-Super-Mare, [t] 01934
621 281. **AT, B&L, H, S, SE, SW**
J&B Dance: Bridgwater,
[t] 01278 428 742. **B&L, SE**
The Market House Dance Studio:
Castle Carey, [t] 01963
351 503. **AT, B&L, O, SE, SW**
Riviera LeRoc Modern Jive,
Taunton, [t] 07887 995 849. **SW**

Wiltshire

Dancers of Chippenham: Chippenham,
[t] 01249 661 131. **B&L, O**

WALES

Aberaeron Dance Club:
Aberaeron, [t] 01570 480 464.
AT, B&L, BS, O, S, SE, SW
Cowbridge Dance: Mid Glamorgan,
[t] 01443 238 867. **B&L, SE**
CSJ Dance: Newport,
[t] 01633 769 232. **O**
Dance World: Newport, [t] 01633
252 625. **AT, B&L, H, O, S, SE, SW**
Edwards Dance Studios: Cardiff,
[t] 02920 616 400. **AT,**
B&L, O, S, SE, SW
New Cottage Dance Centre: Hengoed,
[t] 01443 815 909. **B&L, O, S, SW**
Richards School of Dance:
Rhonnda-Cynon-Taff, [t] 01443
437 074. **AT, B&L, O, SE, SW**
Saturn Dance: Cardiff,
[t] 02920 191 786. **B&L**
Strictly Dance Ltd: Llantrisant
and Porthcawl, [t] 01656
771 713. **AT, B&L, S, SE**

WEST MIDLANDS

Broadway Dance Centre:
Birmingham, [t] 0121 356 4663.
AT, B&L, H, J, O, S, SW

DanceXchange: Birmingham
Hippodrome, [t] 0121 667 6730.
FL, H, J, O
Dawn Parker: Wednesbury, [t] 0121
526 6204. **AT, B&L, H, O, SE, SW**
Fiona Bennett L.I.D.T.A: Dudley,
[t] 01384 243 451. **B&L, SE**
Jean Johnson School of Dancing:
Solihull, [t] 0121 705 2501. **B&L, O, SE**
Philip Jackson and Janet Harrison:
Birmingham, [t] 0121 422 3032.
AT, B&L, O, S, SE, SW
Rhythmics Dance Centre: Cradley
Heath, [t] 01385 413 725.
AT, B&L, H, O, SW

Simply The Best School of Dancing:
Kingswinford, West Midlands,
[t] 01384 866 097. **B&L, SE**
Stan and Yvonne Dancing: Coventry,
[t] 02476 469 316. **AT, B&L, SE, SW**
Tony and Christine Hunnissett:
Solihull, [t] 01564 779 267. **B&L, SE**
The Whiteman Academy:
Birmingham, [t] 07721 579 174. **H, J, O**

Herefordshire

All Seasons Dance and Leisure: Friar
Street, Hereford, [t] 01432 353 756 /
07889 053 464. **B&L, O, S, SE, SW**

Staffordshire

Eric Rowland and Mandy
Heath School of Dancing:
Walsall Wood, [t] 01543 370 549.
AT, B&L, H, O, S, SE, SW
K.Dee.K Danceworks: 1st Floor, 98-102
Church Street, Stoke-on-Trent, [t]
01782 878 888. **B&L, H, J, O, S, SA**
Martina School of Dance: Tamworth,
[t] 01872 330 525. **AT, B&L, O, S, SE, SW**
Style Academy of Dance and
Fitness: Rugeley, [t] 01889 577 539.
AT, B&L, O, S, SW

Warwickshire

Excel Dance Club: Leamington
Spa, [t] 07974 148 117. **B&L, SW**

Worcestershire

Dance at 8: Worcester, Pershore,
Malvern Tewkesbury, [t] 01386
556 665. **B, O, SA, SW, T**
Hilary Saxby School of Dancing:
Evesham, [t] 01242 251 206. **B, J, MT, T**

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Competitions

APRIL

April 7

Staffordshire Championships
Venue: King's Hall, Stoke-on-Trent
Organiser: Alan and Maureen Ford
www.staffordshirechampionships.com

April 14

Oxfordshire Titles
Venue: Wykham Park
Academy, Banbury
Organiser: Martin and Sarah Bird
www.martinbird.net

April 19–21

**The WDC/AL Open European
Championships**
Venue: Blackpool Winter Gardens
Organiser: The DPA/BDF
National League
www.dpaonline.co.uk

April 28

**The All England Latin
Championships**
Venue: Thurrock Civic Hall, Grays
Organiser: Michael
Stylianos and Lorna Lee
www.thebestcomps.net

MAY

May 5

English Open Titles
Venue: St Johns Sports
Centre, Worcester
Organiser: Tony and
Christine Hunnissett
www.danceextras.co.uk

May 5

Epsom Trophy Day
Venue: Chessington
Sports Centre, Surrey
Organiser: TMF Dance Promotions
www.tmfdfance.co.uk

May 11–12

Freedom to Dance
Venue: Copthorne Hotel
Effingham Gatwick
Organiser: Tony and
Amanda Dokman, Jonathan

SEQUENCE AND INVENTIVE DANCE DATES

April 18–21
**Southport Sequence
Easter Festival**
Venue: Floral Hall, Southport
Organiser: David Bullen
01704 540 859

May 19

Allied Dancing Association
Venue: Ellesmere Port Civic Hall
Organiser: Helen Blackburn
07957 423 875

See msdworld.co.uk for more
information on the latest
sequence dance events.
Contact helen@msdworld.plus.com to include your event.

Crossley and John Wood
www.freedomtodance.co.uk

May 18

Worlds Ultimate Challenge
Venue: Copthorne Hotel
Effingham Gatwick
Organiser: Michael
Stylianos and Lorna Lee
www.thebestcomps.net

May 19

**Bridlington Dance Festival
Competition Day**
Venue: Royal Hall Ballroom,
Bridlington Spa
Organiser: Diane Haywood,
Gary Foster and festival
organiser Philip Wylie
www.bridspaa.com/events

May 19

Super League Points Day
Venue: Spirella Ballroom,
Letchworth
Organiser: Richardz
Dance Promotions
www.richardzdance.com

May 23–31

Blackpool Dance Festival
Venue: Winter Gardens, Blackpool
Organiser: Sandra Wilson
www.blackpooldancefestival.com

JUNE

June 2–7

**37th English Riviera
International Dance Festival**
Venue: TLH Victoria Hotel, Torquay
Organiser: James and Claire Taplin
in association with Philip Wylie
of Holiday and Dance
www.holidayanddance.co.uk

June 7–8

**Stars Day One: Open Events
and Day Two: Stars of the
Future – Open to the World**
Venue: Brentwood International
Centre, Brentwood, Essex
Organiser: Mark Lunn and
Alexandra Dore
www.mladancepromotions.co.uk

June 9

Stars Day Three: Pro-Am
Venue: Brentwood International
Centre, Brentwood, Essex
Organiser: ProAm Champions Ltd
www.proamchampions.co.uk

June 23

North West Masters Trophy Day
Venue: Stockport Town Hall
Organiser: Joanne Horrocks
and Donna Wyatt with
NJH Dance Promotions
www.danceworld-uk.co.uk

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La Fin du jour

By Mary Clarke

THURSDAY, MARCH 15, was going to be Kenneth MacMillan's big evening at the Royal Opera House, with the premiere of a new ballet, *La Fin du jour*, a revival of *Diversions* and the popular *Elite Syncopations* to round off the evening. HRH The Princess Margaret was there in her official capacity of president of The Royal Ballet in order to present to MacMillan the *Evening Standard* award for the "most outstanding achievement in ballet during the year". We duly stood for the anthem as the Princess took her seat in the Grand Tier for the first ballet – and then John Tooley, the general administrator, appeared to make his announcement. The Royal Opera House was in the midst of negotiations

with the stage staff (about working a 40-hour week as opposed to the present 45 hours) and they, quite simply, had no stage crew in the house. Rather than cancel the performance they had decided on the sensible compromise of getting the new ballet set up before the crew went home and starting the programme with that. Its setting, fortunately, is fairly anonymous so *Diversions* and *Elite Syncopations* could be danced within its framework. They did have lights and an orchestra – and, of course, dancers. The decision was applauded – there's nothing like union trouble for winning the sympathy of an audience – and I think the sequence of events probably helped *La Fin du jour*. Placed at the centre



of the programme it might have seemed slight – a lot of people thought it was slight – but it makes an enchanting overture to an evening.

APRIL 1979

Above: Kenneth MacMillan rehearsing Merle Park and Wayne Eagling for *La Fin du jour*. The photograph, by Roy Round, appeared on the cover of the March 1979 issue of *Dancing Times*.

Sitter Out



THE CARL ALAN AWARDS were held at the Lyceum Ballroom in the presence of Their Royal Highnesses

Prince Michael of Kent and Princess Michael of Kent, the evening hosted by Mecca. In addition to Michael and

Vicky Barr, pictured left, the amateur dancers' award was shared between Stephen Hillier and Lindsey Tate and David Sycamore and Denise

Weavers; the formation award went to Ted Burrows; and the overseas award to Wim Bonel of Holland. ■

APRIL 1979

Phillida goes dancing

April seems to be a favourite month for dances, many, according to my post-bag, being planned for that fair month. First and foremost, there's the Duchess of Albany's Costume Ball, at Devonshire House, one of the biggest social events of the season, and for which we're all busily looking up historical records, and taking expert advice, to ascertain what was and what was not distinctive of 1760–1790, the Duchess having decreed that only costumes of the Romney–Gainsborough period are to be worn, which must be powdered.

APRIL 1920





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